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REASONS

FOR

BECOMING A ROMAN CATHOLIC;

ADDRESSED TO

THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.

BY FREDERICK LUCAS, ESQ.,

OF THE MIDDLE TEMPLE, BARRISTER-AT-LAW.

THIRD EDITION.

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MDCCCXXXIX.

P R E F A C E.

I HOPE it will not be considered out of place for me to preface the third edition of this little work, with an expression of my sincere thanks for the kindness and favour with which it has been received. That it has met with a success so far surpassing my expectations, is owing, I am aware, less to its own merits, than to a generous willingness on the part of the Catholic body, to assist in every effort, however humble, for the diffusion of the true faith, and to receive with a cordial welcome, all who turn back to the one Fold of the one Shepherd. I can only hope that the success of the design may be answerable

to the kindness with which it has been encouraged. I have nothing to say in explanation or defence of the book itself; with the exception of a few words, in relation to an attack of which it has been made the occasion, upon a reverend gentleman who is loved and honoured by all who know him. He certainly needs no defence of mine; but I am induced to allude to the circumstance, from an apprehension that, even an unfounded statement, if allowed to pass uncontradicted, may possibly have the effect of raising or confirming a prejudice against the Church of which that gentleman is so worthy a minister. The attack in question, (which excited a little surprise and some pity,) appeared in an account of a conversation contained in an Answer to this tract, which has been put forth under the name of Guido Sorelli. As the author, in his pretended replies to my reasoning, has shewn a most extraordinary capacity for misrepresenting or misunderstanding what he has before his eyes in print—a fact which the reader may easily verify—it need not excite any surprise that he has misrepresented words which he may not have understood when they were uttered, and which,

if he understood them then, he may since have forgotten. It is only necessary to state, that I have authority for saying, that the report of the conversation alluded to, is untrue in every material particular. There is nothing else of any importance in Mr. Sorelli's book.

R E A S O N S,

&c.

It seems to me that a person who separates from the religious society in which he has been born and educated, for the purpose of joining another, which is little known to those whom he is leaving, and which, although little known, is yet much disliked, and bitterly condemned, owes it both to them and to himself to furnish some explanation of the reasons by which he has been guided. All change of religion implies a disapprobation—qualified or unqualified—of one body, and approbation of another. And, in the present case, where the Catholics are regarded with so much unfounded jealousy and blind fear by the Society of Friends, it cannot but amount almost to a duty to shew those I am leaving, that I am leaving them with the fullest sympathy, and that the Church which I have joined is deserving of far other feelings than those with which it has been hitherto regarded.

In truth, on this most important of subjects, the mass of Protestants live and breathe in an atmosphere of delusion. They have not the faintest conception of the truth. I say this with the more confidence, because if the Catholic Church were such as I (in common with those I am addressing) formerly conceived her to be, I should not now be in communion with her. But it is not so. She is not such as she has been represented. She is indeed a holy and venerable mother of the faithful, even of those who do not acknowledge her authority, filled with all soundness of doctrine, and all wholesome discipline; and if in days past I contributed in any manner, through ignorance, to spread and strengthen the contempt and hostility with which she has been too long regarded, I accept with joy, as a fitting retribution, that share of ridicule with which this announcement is sure to be at first encountered. It is, then, only on a first view, and where

great ignorance prevails, that the popular notion of the contrast between Catholicism and Quakerism can be honestly entertained. A contrast indeed there is, sufficiently deep and broad, but it is wholly different from the ordinary conception; and it is not of a nature to prevent me from looking back with gratitude to the Giver of all Good, that among so many warring and jarring sects he predestinated me to be born and educated in that one of them which I believe to be the most spiritual of all.

The first establishment of Quakerism was indeed a noble effort in most unpropitious times. While the various sects of Protestants were jangling with fierce and mutual hatred, in the war of words, of pride, and of human reason, a few humble-minded men felt that it was not so that truth was to be attained. They were conscious of a spiritual guidance, far transcending all human reason and sagacity. They saw the absurdity of attempting "To measure the ideas of the Divine mind by those of the human reason."* They saw the monstrous absurdity of subjecting the Revelations of God to the petty criticism of man's understanding. They saw that in this matter of religion, there could be but two parts—God the teacher, teaching with authority,—Man the taught, receiving and learning with submission. They had little sympathy for the "right of private judgment." They knew that not merely is the moral character of man degraded, but his understanding darkened and blinded in the fall. They knew well that if religion is to be moulded and fashioned by the private judgment of every upstart theologian, the end must be a perpetual confusion of sects. They dreaded nothing more than being confounded with the herds of Christians, the swarms of sects around them. They said, "Ours is no sect, no human opinion. We follow the Eternal reason—the true guide—which, whoever follows it with sincerity and self-abandonment, will infallibly lead him in the path which CHRIST has marked out for him."† They knew—none better—the shallowness of Protestantism. They abhorred all that vain talk "I am of Paul, I of Apollos, I of Cephas, and I of CHRIST." They asked the sectarians about them, "Is CHRIST divided?" And seeing that the right of private judgment led to division, to discord, to want of faith, to the exalting of the natural man over the spiritual, they sought for and proclaimed that they had discovered the true rule which would lead men into unity, agreement, and

* Bacon. † George Fox's Journal, anno 1660, vol. i., p. 470, &c. Edit. 1827.

faith. They proclaimed a principle which was of no human invention or discovery, but a Revelation which, when once announced, would, like Christianity in primitive times, go on absorbing everything that came within the sphere of its attraction. They knew that God has chosen the weak things of the world to overcome the strong, the little to abase the lofty, and they were not amazed either at their own weakness, which they knew, or at the might and human defences of that, against which they went out to war. They knew that Christianity spread upwards from among the poor and the ignorant, and they doubted not that their views had a like Divine origin, and were destined to achieve a like glorious victory with the Christianity of the Apostles. The experience of two centuries has shewn the fallacy of these glowing anticipations; but the attempt, springing as it did out of the very hot-bed of Protestantism, was not the less a noble and surprising effort.

Laying their foundations thus deep, or rather—ascending through an abasement of the natural reason of man to this lofty eminence,—it is not surprising that they evolved much that was admirable. In the general dissolution and tearing to pieces of the entireness of Catholic verity, which accompanied the enthronement of error at the time of the Reformation, each sect seized hold of, and appropriated to itself, that portion of truth which the half blindness of its members enabled them to discern. Milton, whose piercing vision and almost prophetic insight could not prevail against the untamed haughtiness and unsettled humour which led him all his life to wander from opinion to opinion, till it has become doubtful whether he died affirming or denying the Divinity of our Blessed SAVIOUR,—Milton well understood this fragmentary condition of Protestantism, where he described how the virgin truth that once “was a perfect shape, most glorious to look upon,” had “her lovely form hewed into a thousand pieces, and scattered to the four winds. From that time,” he continues, “ever since, the sad friends of truth, such as durst appear, imitating the careful search that Isis made for the mangled body of Osiris, went up and down, gathering up limb by limb, still as they could find them. *We have not yet found them all, nor ever shall do, till her Master’s second coming.*”* Truly a sorrowful destiny, as you will agree with me, this ever seeking, never to find!

But amidst this rambling and unguided search for the fragments of true religion, as no Protestant sect, perhaps not even the Unitarian, has lost the whole truth, so but a portion of it has fallen to the lot of each.

Some, like the Anglican church, have retained in greater or less perfection, the outward forms and organization, while the spirit which breathed life into them has fled utterly; and as men in the wild and desolate places of the earth, discover some gigantic bone or skeleton, which tells them that here, in old times, was an organized body, full of life, and health, and vigour, so, in poring over the solemn liturgies and devout services of the Anglican Protestants, you are in every part reminded of some doctrine of the Church, there lifeless and marrowless, which they have retained in name and in skeleton, while they have abjured it in reality and practice; so that those who in the present day are striving to infuse a new life into what has hitherto lain dead and profitless, are found by common consent to differ only by imperceptible shades from the hated and dreaded Papists.

Others, again, naturally unwilling to carry about with them this corpse of truth, which, by a natural process, went on corrupting more and more, till at the beginning of the present century it was half Unitarian and sceptic; others (like the Friends), feeling that they could pay allegiance to no human forms and outward ceremonies of man's construction, resolved to cast away the shell, and seek only for the kernel, determined to adopt nothing which was not Divine in its essence, and with singleness of heart to search alone for that spiritual treasure, which all forms, whether human or Divine, are intended to nourish and preserve. Now it is this aversion to human inventions—this rooted dislike to earthly forms—which withdraw the mind from its heavenly dependence, that I have imbibed among Friends. For the strange self-confidence which first invents its creed, and then settles its worship by vote of the Legislature, I have not—I never shall have—any sympathy. I cling to the substance; I adopt no human forms; none which have not upon them the stamp of Divine authority. The awful and spiritual rites of the Catholic worship are not to be confounded with the cold, inanimate, set forms of the Protestants. Whatever outward resemblance there may be, there is none in reality, there is none within. The liturgies and services of the Anglican Protestants, beautiful as they really are (for they are of Catholic origin), yet stiffen public worship into an outward

uniformity, where there must be an inward diversity, and allow of no public worship but this.

Of the Catholic worship I am unwilling to speak ; I consider it a subject too grave to be lightly touched upon. But in general I may assert that it contains no mere forms. Everything there is substance. The spiritual essence is everywhere indissolubly married by Divine ordinance to the outward symbol. They are not two, but one ; even as the human body and reasonable soul make up one man. The very objection which is most commonly urged against the Catholic worship, *viz.* that it is performed in a learned language, is itself a striking instance of this. The Latin prayers are the prayers of the priest. The worship of those who attend the service does not consist, and is not intended to consist, in their joining in the prayers which the priest offers for himself, and for the congregation. The service itself is a solemn sacrifice, which we believe to be instituted by CHRIST himself—a sacrifice not carnal and outward, like the Jewish sacrifices, which prefigured the eternal offering, but a sacrifice at once symbolical and real—at once commemorative of, and the same with, the sacrifice of Calvary—the priest, the victim, the benefit the same. Such is the service, and the devotions of the worshippers are as various as their wants. For though the Catholic Church, mindful of the wants of her children, has supplied them with various forms, which they can use if they feel the need, and which, coming as they do from that authority to which CHRIST has promised a supernatural guidance in the office of teaching, are received with a certain reverence more than human, yet no worshipper at her altars is bound by a form which does not tend to his own individual edification ; and the poor, the illiterate, those whose hard fate is so piteously bewailed in Protestant harangues and sermons, following as they do, in due succession, all the parts of the sacrifice, are often more blessed in the prayers which they offer in the silence of their own hearts, than the better educated, for whom more helps have been provided. The very end and design of the Catholic worship, an end incidentally promoted by the use of the Latin language, is not to fill the mouth or the natural understanding with beautiful forms of words, expressing accurately and logically all the wants of man, but to nourish a habit of aspiration, of ejaculation, of inward longing and hungering after the true spiritual food ; and most admirably does it answer this purpose. The hardship of the service being in an unknown tongue can be no object of the indignation of a

Member of the Society of Friends. I can barely allude to the awful feeling of reverence with which the Catholic bows his head at the elevation of the Blessed Host, and the deep spiritual impression it necessarily produces on those with whom it is no outward form, but the real presence of the DIVINITY himself which they venerate and adore. This spirituality of the daily worship of the Catholics is unnoticed by the sceptical or prejudiced Protestant, who enters a chapel, takes a hasty glance at something strange, he knows not what, and never suspects that beneath the outward form, which is the subject of his jibes and sneers, there lies concealed an inward spiritual treasure, to which the eye of the natural man can never penetrate.

When, in addition to these things (recollect I am not trying to prove the truth of the Catholic doctrines,* but merely explaining my own views and feelings),—when, in addition to these things, I called to mind the masters of spiritual wisdom, whom God hath raised up in the Church—of whom I need only recall the familiar names of Thomas-a-Kempis, St. Bernard and Fenelon;—when I reflected on the high estimation in which habits of contemplation have ever been held, and the ardour with which they have been encouraged;—when I became acquainted with the affectionate zeal with which the Church urges all men, lay and clerical, to retire from the bustle of active life, and, by protracted retreats of days and weeks in some pious sanctuary, to give the heart an opportunity of weaning its affections from earthly pursuits, and, by sinking deep into itself, and enjoying, through the discipline of silence, uninterrupted converse with God, acquiring strength to pursue henceforth the business of the world with a calm, devout, and harmonious composure;—when I saw these things, I said to myself, the Church which retains these practices has not been wholly forsaken of God.† I saw here the faith and the feelings I had of old cherished, recognised and with all authority sanctioned, and

* If any one should wish to see the Catholic doctrines explained and defended at length, I must refer him to Milner's "End of Controversy," Dr. Wiseman's "Lectures on the Doctrines of the Catholic Church," and the "Amicable Discussion on the Church of England and the Reformation," by the Bishop of Strasburg. Booker and Dolman, 61, New Bond-street.

† It is painful to observe the Pagan and sceptical spirit with which these retreats are judged by even devout Protestants. Dr. Southey, in his History of Brazil, (vol. i. p. 267), after telling us that Mem de Sa, sent out from Portugal as Governor, "On his landing shut himself up with the Jesuits, and, according

enforced. From the moment I saw these things, I confess my heart warmed towards that Holy Church, which is the mystical body of Christ.

Though the Catholic worship is outwardly a worship of forms, yet within it is a worship of the spirit. The old Catholic feeling as to the superiority of prayer and spiritual communion with God over preaching, is well expressed in the saying of the devout monarch : " I would rather have a quarter of an hour's conversation with my friend than hear an hour's discourse in his praise." Accordingly the Catholic worship consists, as it always has consisted, in spiritual communion, in a devout thanksgiving and offering of one's self to God, along with the holy and spiritual sacrifice of the new law. Preaching was made less account of; it was considered as useful indeed, and as tending to edification, but prayer and inward exercises were looked upon as the one thing needful. Such was the Catholic spirit of those times, vulgarly called dark, which produced some of the deepest works of spiritual wisdom—(the *Imitation of Christ* for instance)—that have ever appeared. But when Protestantism, disputatious Protestantism, reared her baleful visage above the horizon, it was discovered that men were to be saved by sermons, by the foolishness of preaching (perverting the language of the Apostle), by discourses two hours long, branching out into nineteen or twenty divisions, by the hearing of the outward ear, not by the inward teaching of the spirit. There ensued an utter forgetfulness of the difference between the conversion of the heathen and the edification of the faithful : how the instrument of the former was preaching, whereby the ignorant were brought to the threshold of Christianity; and the instruments of the latter were the solemn offices of the church, whereby the negligent and remiss who had already received outward instruction, were led unto the teaching of the HOLY GHOST. Preaching became all in all. Men with itching ears, flocked to their Churches and endured the service for the sake of the Godly discourse that was to follow, instead of flocking to the Church for the service,

o their account, spent eight days in studying the Spiritual Exercises of Loyola, under Nobrega," adds this reflection : "They libel Mem de Sa, and they libel themselves, in supposing that this retirement was not employed in obtaining information of the state of the country from the best politician in it." As if an eight days' spiritual converse with God might not be of more value in composing the mind and purifying it, to discern with clearer insight even matters of human wisdom, than the same time spent in mere natural activity. The above sentence could have been written neither by a true Quaker nor a true Catholic; it could have come from no one but a Protestant or a Pagan.

for the devotion, for the spiritual exercise, and listening with thankfulness to the sermon, as a useful addition to the other, which was indeed the matter of prime, and indispensable necessity. It was half forgotten, that worship consisted not in listening to sermons, nor in a critical comprehension of doctrines, but in prayer, in adoration, in devout humble supplication, in spiritual communion with God, in the denial of self, in the teaching of the HOLY GHOST.

Now it was against this sophistical, pagan, rationalist tendency of Protestantism, so opposed to the practices and teaching of the Catholic Church, that the founders of Quakerism revolted, and with a divine instinct that would have assuredly preserved them within the Church if they had been fortunate enough to have been born within it, they set at nought with the disregard it so richly merited, the whole wrangling theology of the sects; and discerning no Divine institution in the outward forms by which they were surrounded, they resolved to shake off, in Divine matters, the authority of men, and surrender themselves with an entire simplicity of heart to the authority and teaching of God. In all this there was nothing more than the sacred principle of Catholicism, striving in unfavourable times to realize itself, and establish itself amidst the anarchy of human opinions.

Strictly dependent on this subject of spiritual worship, is the feeling of the close connection between the supernatural world and human daily life. The spirit of Protestantism which produced, and has been in its turn influenced by the sceptical, worldly tendencies of modern times, has endeavoured as much as possible, to refine away every thing supernatural out of the domain of daily life. In the sacraments of the Anglican Protestants, in their ordination service, in the service of the visitation of the sick, there is, in words, enough to convince one that their founders believed, or thought proper to profess, that the Church of CHRIST is endowed with glorious privileges, and has not been left destitute of guidance from above. But, alas ! in practice all this is refined away. Protestants believe that the signs and wonders with which God has illustrated the history of Christianity, are things separated from us by a gulf of centuries. These things were necessary in the infant Church, and to convince and convert the ignorant, sensual, pagan nations eighteen centuries ago. But in the present enlightened age, miracles are no longer needed. The power of God is no longer disclosed visibly before the world; men are left like the

rocks, and stones, and trees of outward nature, to the guidance and operation of general and unchangeable laws. The judgments of God are forgotten, and men look no longer for the accomplishment of the promises vouchsafed by Him to the true believers.*

Accordingly in entering a church to partake of the Eucharist according to the Anglican doctrine, the communicant has possibly no very precise notion of the exact nature of the rite of which he is to be a partaker. At any rate, he knows nothing of the belief of those who approach the communion table along with him. Among those who profess to derive strength from a joint participation with others in a holy rite, it is by no means impossible that no two can be found agreeing as to the true nature of the rite itself. One person approaches the table with a belief that he is assisting at a sacrifice, and is *really* receiving, though only in a spiritual sense, the body and blood of our blessed SAVIOUR. This communicant is elbowed by another who supposes that there is a real spiritual presence, but denounces the doctrine of the sacrifice. A third believes there is no presence at all, but that the sacrament has been instituted as the means of a grace, which can be attained in no other manner. A fourth thinks it proper to communicate because it is commanded, and believes there is a certain grace due to obedience, but expects to receive no grace which he would not have an equal right to expect from the performance of any other act of obedience. All the while, the theory of the priest, perhaps, differs from all these. He has his doubts whether there is any command whatever, but he thinks the rite useful as a commemoration, and above all as a part of the established order; and minister as he is of an earthly ceremony, he lifts his eyes to heaven, and utters the words of consecration, merely to impress with awe the ignorant laity to whom he administers. Admirable unanimity! admirable communion of feeling! wonderful communion of the Saints! But what I am at present concerned with, is not the discord, but the cause of the discord, the want of faith, the sceptical spirit which is unwilling to believe in the

* So great is the scepticism of Protestants on these matters, that a great writer of our times, of unquestioned devotion and zeal—the late Mr. Coleridge, avows his strong persuasion that the passage at the end of St. Mark's Gospel, "These signs shall follow them that believe. In my name they shall cast out devils: they shall speak with new tongues: they shall take up serpents, &c. &c.;" is an interpolation of a later date than the Acts of the Apostles, by which he thinks it was suggested.—*Literary Remains*, (vol. iii. p. 47, 8).

real, substantial intervention of the supernatural world, in the concerns of daily life—the Protestant habit of accommodating the Revelations of an infinite God to the narrow capacities of human reason.

Take another instance, in the powers pretended to be conferred on priests at their ordination, and pretended to be exercised in the visitation of the sick. These things, confession and absolution, were borrowed from the Catholics by men of worldly wisdom, anxious to hit the golden mean, to devise some course to satisfy the majority, to signalise their skill in the conduct of a great political revolution, by the craft with which they could clip and pare, and pad out, retrench, alter, and amend with their unholy hands (so as to pander to the avarice of the great, without awakening the passions of the multitude), a creed, a liturgy, a church government, which had descended to them from the Apostolic ages. Accordingly, we see the result. The doctrine is received in words, but it is not acted upon in practice. Men are afraid of it. It supposes too strongly the principle of supernatural intervention, which the spirit of Protestantism can by no means adopt in reality. The whole thing is cold, formal, and lifeless. With many it is not even a form, but a false pretension; and a clergyman may be seen publishing in the newspapers his abhorrence of the rite by which he holds his living, and his firm disbelief of the entire doctrine.*

Now, in radical opposition to this scepticism and spirit of unbelief, there stand out, to my apprehension, two bodies of Christians who agree, at least in their hostility, to this:—the Friends and the Catholics. The latter, in all their sacraments and services, and in their belief of the infallibility of the Church; the former in their mode of worship and their ministry; and both of them, in their belief in particular Revelations, and in the power of working miracles† in modern times. When, moreover, I perceive in both bodies the idea of a Divine authority, of a teaching from God in the ministry, a practical acknowledgment of the reality and importance of Church discipline and mutual supervision and help, the spiritual communion of the faithful, the denial and renunciation of self and of human reason, which is carried out among the Friends far further (I believe) than among other Protestants, and by the Catholics further even than by the Friends, I acknowledge with thankfulness that my

* Letter in the *Chronicle* some few weeks ago. † George Fox's Journal, *passim*.

familiarity with, and attachment to, many of the leading principles of Friends, has very much facilitated my coming back to the Catholic Church ; and I assert, that whatever outward differences there may be, there should, if they understood one another, be far more sympathy felt by Friends with the solemn realities of the Catholic worship, the profound contemplative discipline of the Catholic practice so favourable to inward stillness of mind, and the unshrinking faith enshrined in the Catholic belief, than with the lifeless, unspiritual forms of the Protestants, their entire neglect of contemplative and inward training, their timid, uncertain, and wavering opinions. Of course I do not mean to assert that the Catholic modes of worship promote spiritual feelings in the minds of those who receive them, or witness them, without faith, or, that to a Quaker present at them for the first time, they can ever be otherwise than repulsive. But I do firmly believe that in the minds of those who receive and adopt them with faith, they are in their own nature, far more calculated to promote the development and growth of true, healthy, and spiritual feeling, than the mode of worship and the discipline of any other denomination of Christians. In adopting the Catholic faith, I do not in the least feel that I am renouncing a spiritual mode of worship for a formal one, but that I am renouncing a mode of worship which aims imperfectly at entire spirituality, for one which secures it, so far as it can be secured on earth, by the presence of a variety of cheering and consoling assistances, means and instruments of Grace, which our Blessed SAVIOUR himself has graciously condescended to bestow upon us.

Among many other observations that might be made, all tending to the same point, I will insist upon but one more, but that one involves the whole groundwork of the respective systems. It will be seen that the Friends agree with the Catholics in acknowledging a fundamental principle rejected by all the various sects of Protestants. I have already remarked that the Society of Friends had its origin, in a belief that all other bodies of Christians, not merely erred in the articles of their creeds, but erred fundamentally in the means they adopted to arrive at truth. The right of private judgment, the watchword of the Reformation, seemed to them an arrogant pretence to exalt the human understanding, and make it the judge and censor of the Divine counsels. They recognised in man's fallen, purblind nature the necessity of an absolute—infallible guide. They knew that the same mental degradation which rendered a Reve-

lation necessary, to raise man out of the abyss into which his sins had plunged him, incapacitated him from measuring and criticizing the Revelation itself. They held, what I cannot but believe one of the profoundest principles in all theology, that that must be a strange scheme of Revelation, which leaves the blinded human intellect, and the perverse human will, at liberty to examine, to criticize, to adopt or reject at pleasure. They knew that the sagacity of the highest human genius and the uprightness of the sincerest human heart, were but finite and limited, and that the Revelations of God were infinite. They knew that for the purpose of safe walking in the shadows of this world, man has need of a surer basis than opinion, the utmost assurance that a Protestant can ever attain to; that if in addition to the passions and infirmities of his nature, the defences of revealed truth are weakened by doubt or scepticism as to what is really revealed, the whole spiritual edifice must totter and fall, and speedily crumble into dust. In the war of sects around them they saw full proof of (what they knew from their own minds) that the right of private judgment, the Protestant deification of the independence of the human understanding, must lead to sects and divisions; while they knew that the simplicity of the Divine truth must lead to unity and concord. They read aright those oft repeated injunctions of the New Testament, to preserve peace, concord, outward unity, agreement in doctrine; and the fearful denunciations against heresy and schism. They knew that CHRIST's mystical body—the Church—ought to be one, both inwardly and outwardly, and they knew that the dissensions, both outward and inward, which they heard raging on every side, must proceed from the sects having built on a false foundation.

In this first great principle then, they agreed with the Catholics, that there must be an infallible guide somewhere; that a Revelation which was to raise fallen human nature into a state of grace and regeneration, must in its very nature be certain, and the knowledge of it certainly attainable, or it would be essentially unsuited to the wants of man. Where, then, was this principle of certainty, of infallibility, to be found? Coming out from the very dregs of Protestantism, they were not likely to look for it in the authority of the Catholic Church. The next and most obvious resource was the written word of God. But here they were encountered by two great difficulties; first, the difficulty of interpreting a book never systematic or explicit, written in a strange idiom, and full of the boldest and most figurative language, not secure against the mistakes or the frauds

of transcribers, and accessible only to the largest portion of mankind, through the medium of translations, which, whatever their honesty or skill, were after all from the hands of men but imperfectly acquainted with the original languages, and at every step biased, consciously or unconsciously, by their own preconceived opinions. Their next difficulty was, among a variety of conflicting opinions, how to determine the canon of Scripture, and to know what books were inspired and of authority, and what were not. Let us hear Robert Barclay, their ablest apologist, upon those two points. "The Scriptures are not sufficient, neither were ever appointed to be the adequate and only rule, nor yet can guide or direct a Christian in all those things that are needful for him to know."* Speaking of the absurdity of making the Scriptures even the chief rule, he says†—"How many illiterate and yet good men are there in the Church of God, who cannot read a letter in their own mother tongue? These can have no immediate knowledge of the rule of their faith; so their faith must needs depend upon the credit of other men's reading, or relating it to them; where either the altering, adding, or omitting of a little word may be a foundation in the poor hearer of a very dangerous mistake, whereby he may either continue in some iniquity ignorantly, or believe a lie confidently. . . . But further; suppose all could read the Scriptures in their own language, . . . must not all here depend upon the honesty and faithfulness of the interpreters? . . . And that even the last translators in the vulgar languages need to be corrected, learned men do confess. Therein no less difficulty occurs, even to those skilled in the original languages, who cannot so immediately receive the mind of the authors in these writings, as that their faith does not at least obliquely depend upon the honesty and credit of the transcribers, since the original copies are granted by all, not to be now extant. . . . But, further, the various readings of the Hebrew character, . . . the disagreement of divers citations, &c. &c.; all these, and much more which might be alleged, puts the minds even of the learned into infinite doubts, scruples, and inextricable difficulties, whence we may very safely conclude, that JESUS CHRIST, who promised to be *always* with his children, to lead them into *all truth*, to guard them against the devices of the enemy, and to establish their faith upon an *unmoveable rock*, left them not to be principally ruled

* Apology, prop. ii., s. ix.

† Prop. iii., s. iv.

by that which was subject in itself to many uncertainties." "How shall a Protestant prove by Scripture to such as deny the Epistle of James to be authentic, that it ought to be received? . . . There is this unavoidable necessity to say we know it by the same spirit from which it was written; or otherwise to step back to Rome, and say, we know by tradition that the Church hath declared it to be canonical; and the Church is infallible. Let them find a mean if they can. So that out of this objection we shall draw an unanswerable argument, *ad hominem*, to our purpose."*

The Scripture then, they justly concluded, whatever its value as an instrument or means, could not be the ground or rule of faith. But the argument might even be carried further. The uncertainty of the Scriptures does not lie merely in their form, but in their matter. For if, as Robert Barclay argues, the scripture no where assures us that this or that book is to be taken as canonical, still less does it assure us that all the books taken together, were ever intended to be a complete record of the Revelation. Indeed that it was intended to be so, seems a gratuitous assumption, wholly opposed to probability. The books were written at different times, to answer various purposes. There seems to have been no intention on the part of the Apostles to commit the whole of the Christian doctrines to writing, nor do they seem to have taken any steps, or left any directions as to making a collection of their writings, and binding them together, as the book of the new law. They left them scattered about the world, some here, some there, and it was not till generations after their deaths that any attempt seems to have been made to determine which were canonical and authoritative and which not. There is not the smallest ground for supposing that the Apostles left the world with the belief that they had provided for the perpetuity of the faith by the writings they had left behind them. Singularly enough the only passage (I believe) in which an allusion is made to the means of perpetuating the knowledge of the faith, is a passage in which St. Paul enjoins Timothy,†—not to make a collection of canonical writings, but—to commit what he has heard of St. Paul "to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." Strange that in these days, the true rule of our faith should be one of which the Apostles had no conception, and with respect to which they seem to have been entirely careless,

* Prop. iii., s. ix.

† Tim. II., ii., 2.

leaving it for men who came after them, to determine the grounds of that faith, to the establishment and diffusion of which they had dedicated their lives.

But we may even go further than this. There is strong positive evidence of the Scriptures having been intentionally left incomplete. Thus when St. Paul is writing to any of the Churches, as to the Corinthians,* instructing them how to correct an abuse, he satisfies himself with giving a few general exhortations and directions, sufficient to correct the most pressing part of the abuse, and the remainder he leaves to be corrected when he visits them: "The rest will I set in order when I come." In judging of an ordinary document, no one reading this passage (which relates to the administration of the Eucharist) would conceive himself entitled to conclude, that where the Apostle refers to future verbal instructions for a more detailed explanation, there the written instructions are intended to be complete. Again; it is I believe an admitted fact with regard to the early Christians, that an unwillingness to cast their pearls before swine, to desecrate the holiest mysteries by exposing them to the ridicule of the heathen, led them to adopt various expedients to conceal them from all but the initiated. Hence arose what has been called the *Disciplina arcani*, the discipline of the secret. The secrecy and mystery which were thus observed, are well known to have laid the ground-work of the most horrible charges against them, of murder, cannibalism, and incest. It was the belief of the early Christians, that the same motive weighed upon the minds of the Apostles in determining what they should commit to writing.† The life of our blessed SAVIOUR, and the more striking, popular, and impressive parts of his discourses, were admirably adapted for preservation in a written form, and every thing in them that involves delineation of character must have perished but for this record. The Gospel of St. John proves that the other Evangelists had no intention of committing to writing the most

* Cor. I. ii., 34.

† Take the following from Clement, of Alexandria, who died A. D. 215: "I designedly omit many things, fearing to write what I could wish prudently to conceal, lest those who may read my writings should understand them in a wrong and perverted sense; and we should be accused, according to the proverb, of putting a sword into an infant's hand. There are certain things discoverable in the Holy Scriptures, although they are not clearly expressed. There will be others on which it will insist more explicitly; and others again which it will merely touch upon; but it will endeavour so to veil, as yet to declare them; so to hide, as yet to reveal them; and so to pass them over in silence, as yet to let them appear."

mysterious discourses of our SAVIOUR to his Apostles, and even St. John has given us, he says, merely a selection or specimen, that we might understand the nature and mode of our blessed SAVIOUR's discourses, not that we should learn all the Revelation from that record. In addition to this, it is certain that the highest mysteries of Christianity were not even communicated to the Apostles themselves before the resurrection. "I have many things to say unto you," says our SAVIOUR in his last discourse to them before his crucifixion, "but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when he, the spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth."* And St. Luke tells us,† that the forty days which intervened between the resurrection and ascension, were spent by our blessed SAVIOUR, not in the few transient interviews recorded in the New Testament, but in speaking to them of the things relating to the kingdom of God. Where then, in Scripture, is the record of those things, which,—either by the inspiration of the HOLY SPIRIT, or in the later discourses of our SAVIOUR, of which we have no narrative,—were revealed to the Apostles, for the building up of the Church of Christ? We cannot say. One thing however is certain; the Apostles had no intention of preserving these things in writing, nor is there any evidence that they conceived that their united writings contained a complete account of the doctrine of which CHRIST had made them stewards, and which they had spent their lives in delivering to the Church. The Acts of the Apostles are evidently a narrative of such of the proceedings of the Apostles, as came under St. Luke's own personal observation. The Epistles are for the most part dictated by the occasion; and in them the writer says just so much as is necessary for his immediate purpose, and to enable his correspondents, to whom all the circumstances were known, to appreciate his counsels, and to act upon them until a personal visit should enable him to supply verbally, what he judged it unfit to commit to writing.

From some or all of these reasons, it is obvious that there is no just ground to assume that the New Testament is, or was ever intended to be, a complete record of the commands of CHRIST to his Church; and, if complete, it is admitted between the Friends and the Catholics that the record is not of such a kind as to admit of its being considered the chief rule of faith. At the same time we are agreed in admitting the

* John, xvi., 12, 13.

† Acts, i., 2, 3.

necessity of some one unchanging, unfailing guide, which may enable each man to preserve his due place, not of inquirer, criticizer, investigator, or sect-maker, but of humble and submissive scholar to the teachings of a higher wisdom. Let us see, then, what guide is proposed to us by the Friends; and if, on examination, it should appear that this guide, however unchanging and unfailing in himself, yet has not condescended to afford to man in the way they suppose, an unchanging, unfailing guidance; and that the doctrine of Friends leaves the business of sect-making to go on without help or remedy; I hope to be excused if I adhere firmly to their fundamental principle, if I still reject every principle that leads to the production of sects and divisions, and find in the Catholic Church the solution of that problem which I have learned amongst them, but of which amongst them I have in vain sought for a satisfactory solution.

The doctrine of Friends on this most important point is, of course, well known to those whom I am addressing, and, therefore, I need occupy no long time in explaining it; but yet, because my observations on it will be much facilitated by stating it pretty fully in the language of Robert Barclay, I select the following sentences from the second and third Propositions of his Apology:—“The testimony of the Spirit is that alone by which the true knowledge of God hath been, is, and can be only revealed. . . . These Divine inward revelations, which we make absolutely necessary for the building up of true faith, neither do, nor can, ever contradict the outward testimony of the Scriptures, or right and sound reason. . . . This Divine revelation and inward illumination is that which is evident and clear of itself, forcing, by its own evidence and clearness, the well-disposed understanding to assent, irresistibly moving the same thereunto, even as the common principles of natural truths do move and incline the mind to a natural assent; as that, *the whole is greater than its part, &c.*”* “I would, however, not be understood as if hereby I excluded those other means of knowledge from any use or service to man; it is far from me so to judge, as concerning the *Scriptures*, as in the next proposition will more plainly appear. The question is not what may be profitable or helpful, but what is absolutely necessary.”† “Whatsoever doctrine is contrary unto the testimony of Scripture may, therefore, justly be rejected as

* Prop. ii.

† Sec. 4.

false. And, for our parts, we are very willing that all our doctrines and practices be tried by them; which we never refused, nor ever shall in all controversies with our adversaries, as the judge and test. We shall also be very willing to admit it as a positive certain maxim, *that whatsoever any do pretending to the Spirit which is contrary to the Scriptures, be accounted and reckoned a delusion of the Devil.*"*

"No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. This Scripture, which is full of truth, and answereth full well to the enlightened understanding of the spiritual and real Christian, may, perhaps, prove very strange to the carnal and pretended follower of CHRIST, by whom, perhaps, it hath not been so diligently remarked. Here the Apostle doth so much require the Holy Spirit in the things that relate to a Christian, that he positively avers, we cannot so much as affirm *Jesus to be the Lord without it*; which insinuates no less than that the spiritual truths of the Gospel are as lies in the mouths of carnal and unspiritual men; for though in themselves they be true, yet are they not true as to them, because not known nor uttered forth in and by that principle and spirit that ought to direct the mind and actuate it."†

"What the work of the Spirit is, is partly before shewn, which CHRIST compriseth in two or three things: *He will guide you into all truth; he will teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance.* Christians are always to be led inwardly and immediately by the Spirit of God dwelling in them, and the same is a standing and perpetual ordinance, as well to the Church in general in all ages, as to every individual member in particular. The promises of CHRIST to his children are *Yea*, and *Amen*, and cannot fail, but must of necessity be fulfilled. And CHRIST hath promised that the COMFORTER, the HOLY GHOST, the SPIRIT OF TRUTH, shall abide with his children for ever—shall dwell with them—shall be in them—shall lead them into all truth—shall teach them all things, and bring all things to their remembrance."‡

"The most usual objection is, that *these Revelations are uncertain.* But this bespeaketh much ignorance in the opposers. . . . For it is one thing to affirm *that the true and undoubted Revelation of God's Spirit is certain and infallible*, and another thing to affirm that this or that particular person or people is led infallibly by this Revelation in what they

* Prop. iii., s. 6. † Prop. ii., s. 6. ‡ Sec. 10.

speak or write, because they affirm themselves to be so led by the inward and immediate Revelation of the Spirit. The first is only asserted by us, the latter may be called in question. The question is not, who are, or are not, so led? But whether all ought not, or may not, be so led? If any depart from this certain guide in deeds, and yet in words pretend to be led by it into things that are not good, it will not from thence follow, that the true guidance of the Spirit is uncertain, or ought not to be followed, no more than it will follow that the sun sheweth not light because a blind man, or one who wilfully shuts his eyes, falls into a ditch at noon-day, for want of light. All these mistakes, therefore, are to be ascribed to the weakness or wickedness of men, and not to that HOLY SPIRIT. [Here he instances the Gnostics and Anabaptists, &c.]. For my part, as I have never a whit the lower esteem of the blessed testimony of the Holy Scriptures, nor do the less respect any solid tradition that is answerable, and according to truth; neither at all despise reason — that noble and excellent faculty of the mind — because wicked men have abused the name of them to cover their wickedness and deceive the simple; so would I not have any reject or doubt the certainty of that unerring spirit, which God hath given his children, as that which can alone guide them into all truth, because some have falsely pretended to it.”*

“We, then, trust to, and confide in this Spirit, because we know, and certainly believe, that it can only lead us aright, and never mislead us; and from this certain confidence it is that we affirm, that no Revelation coming from it can ever contradict the Scripture’s testimony, nor right reason; not as making this a more certain rule to ourselves, but as condescending to such, who, not discerning the Revelations of the Spirit as they proceed purely from God, will try them by these mediums. Yet those that have their spiritual senses, and can savour the things of the Spirit at the first blush, can discern them, without, or before they apply them either to Scripture or reason.”†

It is very interesting to observe how much of the words, and how much more of the spirit of all this, is not merely admitted in the Catholic Church, but is strenuously urged and enforced by it. No Catholic doubts or denies that, “the testimony of the Spirit is that alone by which the true knowledge of God hath been, is, and can be only revealed;” or that the truths of

* Sec. 13, 14.

† Sec. 15.

Christianity, though most commonly conveyed into the natural understanding by outward teaching, and there quickened into spiritual truths by the influence of the HOLY GHOST, may be, nay, are at times, revealed *objectively* (to use R. Barclay's expression) to the spiritual sense, without the intervention of outward teaching. No Catholic denies that the only one thing absolutely necessary, to convey the truths of Christianity to the mind, is the HOLY SPIRIT; or that the spiritual discernment if perfectly free from the taint of sin, is, by Divine grace, adequate to the discrimination of spiritual truth from falsehood; or that no man can truly affirm JESUS to be the LORD, or any the least revealed truth, without the help of the SPIRIT; or that "spiritual truths are as lies in the mouths of carnal and unspiritual men;" or that the guidance of the SPIRIT OF GOD, "is a standing and perpetual ordinance, as well to the Church in general in all ages, as to every individual member in particular;" or that the "Comforter shall abide with the children of God for ever, dwell with them, be in them, and lead them into all truth, &c." All this is well known to, and believed by every real Catholic, who does not hesitate in feeling assured that the influence of the HOLY SPIRIT is as real, substantial, supernatural, and special, now as it ever was. The main difference between the Catholic and the Friend is this, that when the latter is asked how true Revelations are to be discerned from false, he answers, *By their conformity with the Holy Scriptures*, the uncertainty and doubtfulness of which the Friend has before most strongly insisted on; whereas the Catholic answers, *By their conformity with the faith and discipline of the Catholic Church*, which is at least a fixed and certain rule.

Nor is it possible to reply to this profession of Catholic faith, by asserting that, whatever may be held in words, the Catholic practice is very different, and that the Catholic forms and ceremonies lead necessarily into formality. If any such assertion were made, I would reply, that all persons, in common charity, should be very cautious how they judge others, of whom they know so little, as most Protestants know of the inward devotion of Catholics. Of the inward devotion of the Catholics, taken individually, it is impossible to form any accurate estimate. It varies in different individuals, in different parishes, in different counties, in different kingdoms, in different quarters of the globe. There was a vast difference among the Churches of Asia, addressed in the Apocalypse. Some were hot, some were cold, some were neither hot nor cold. And it is the same among the Catholics in the present day.

But if we wish really to form an estimate of how far the profession of faith made above is a mere profession, and how far it is a living practice, essentially springing from, and truly nourished by, the Catholic worship, we have nothing to do but to cast our eyes on the spiritual and mystic divines of the Church, whose works, unequalled in profusion, and depth of spiritual insight, are also everywhere the popular books of devotion of all classes of society. If we wish to appreciate the difference between human forms which formalize, and Divine institutions which nourish and sustain the spirit, we have only to compare in this respect the Catholic Church with the Anglican. Of the Anglican divines, I cannot but speak in terms of very high praise. Their learning, intellect, sagacity, imagination, and pure moral character are extremely commendable. Their powers of language, their human eloquence are hardly to be matched. Take Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Living and Dying*, for instance; what a delightful book it is! Full of love, and purity, and pathos, wit, learning, fancy, and powers of reasoning! It is deservedly one of the most popular devotional compositions of the school from which it proceeds. Its merit, however, is all of a human character, and can be measured by human tests and standards, nor has the Anglican school of divines soared above this human region. But compare this with the well-known *Imitation of CHRIST*. *Compare!* I ought rather to have said *contrast*, for it is impossible to compare them. Who thinks, in reading this immortal work, of the learning, the imagination, the fancy, the eloquence, the sagacity, the intellect, or any one human quality whatever of its pious author? It is absolutely devoid of all human individuality. Its very style, we are told by critics,* is barbarous and impure. It does not bear upon it the stamp of any human characteristic. It is rather a voice proceeding from the sanctuary and the throne of God, and, because addressed to man, clothing itself in human words, but those the simplest and plainest, and, in its passage to the heart, untainted by any human admixture. It is a collection of unpolished words, giving utterance to the profoundest spiritual truths, and revealing the purest spiritual insight. It is rather an inspiration than a human composition. This is the work which we are told by a Protestant writer,† "is said to have gone through 1,800 editions, and has probably been more read than any

* Hallam's History of Literature.

† Hallam.

one work after the Scriptures." Nor does this work, widely diffused as it ever has been, stand alone. The popular Catholic devotional theology, has ever been of this class, and the ages, which Protestants call "dark," have produced these works in an abundance, which no "enlightened age" has yet equalled. In devotional theology, the purity of the Reformation has been left far behind by the despised and calumniated Catholics. Time would fail me to speak at length of "Tauler, whose sermons were long popular, and have often been printed,"* and some of whose mystical works have been reprinted for popular use, within a very few years; St. Augustine, the glorious Doctor, whose Confessions and Meditations have been the delight and consolation of millions; St. Bernard, once the spiritual ruler of Europe; St. Francis de Sales, with his Treatise on the love of God, and other spiritual writings, with which Catholics are well acquainted; Cardinal Bona, St. Bonaventura, Cardinal Bellarmine, Fenelon, and many others, whose praise is in all the churches. At the very time, when the Reformation was spreading anarchy, and laying the foundations of atheism throughout Europe, when the Catholics were everywhere calumniated as idolaters, formalists, sensual, unspiritual, and what not, Louis de Blois, the friend of the Emperor Charles V., was sending forth into the world such sentences as these:† "When I blame indolence, I mean vicious indolence; for there is a kind of inactivity which is highly praiseworthy. It is when the soul reposes in the bosom of the Divinity, and freed from the noise and impression of outward objects, keeps an interior silence, and seems to be no longer in activity, but passively to receive the favours of her well-beloved."

And does any one suppose that these devout worshippers in spirit, and in truth, felt themselves *incumbered* by the forms of Catholic worship, or adopted them only from custom, or as useful only to the less instructed, and, therefore, to be kept up and practised by themselves, to avoid a breach of public order? Nothing of the sort. They knew the immense value of the Catholic sacraments to the nourishment of the spiritual life within themselves. They recommended them to others, because they had themselves experienced the refreshment that God bestows through their instrumentality, according to the promises of CHRIST. They knew, that without that

* Hallam.

† Speculum Religiosorum.

heavenly food their own souls would languish and become enfeebled; and, accordingly, their highest spiritual counsels, their own most ardent labours after spirituality, were intended to prepare themselves and others to receive fitly that blessed sacrament, which they knew to be at once the reward of past faithfulness, and the divinely appointed means of receiving grace to persevere to the end, and reach greater perfection. Whoever wishes to understand the feelings of these men of the interior life, on this subject, should study the *Imitation of CHRIST*, of which it has been truly said, that the fourth book, that on the Eucharist, is the key to the whole work, is the completion of the whole design, the final end for which the whole treatise was written.* I say, then, with perfect confidence, that the vast numbers of these mystic writers in every age of the Catholic Church (the present not excepted) is a proof of the spirit which the Church has ever nourished; and the boundless popularity of their writings shews the kind of spiritual food with which her faithful have been ever fed. The charge of formalism against the Catholic Church is one of the most monstrous that ever was invented. She is of all Churches the most spiritual, and the strongest bulwark against the inroads of carnality and sense.

I shall now go on to state the grounds upon which I found myself unable to agree on all points with the doctrine laid down by Robert Barclay, at the same time that I felt the undeniable truth of the fundamental principles which he has so clearly established. Nothing seems to me more certain than that man needs an infallible guide in religious matters, and I have always believed with Robert Barclay that the Bible is wholly unfitted to be such a guide. According to the Society of Friends, the chief or principal guide, which is itself an infallible one, and supplies the requisite aid for the understanding of doubtful or difficult passages in the Bible, is the HOLY SPIRIT; which is a guide both to the Church in all ages, and to every individual member of the Church, and which, if its teaching be sincerely obeyed, will infallibly lead the seeker after Divine knowledge into all truth. Robert Barclay very justly replies to those who object that the Gnostics of old, and the Anabaptists of modern times, allege the Revelations of the Spirit for their follies and wickedness; that a principle is not to be rejected because impure men, falsely

* Kenelm Henry Digby's *Mores Catholici*.

pretending to act upon it, have acted wickedly. With this I agree; and I beg that it may be admitted in favour of the Catholics. If the objection contained nothing more than this, it would indeed be well. But how is it with men, who pass their whole lives in humble and sincere dependence upon the HOLY SPIRIT, who are full (making allowance for human failings) of spiritual unction, devoutness, zeal, and charity, and whose lives are models to the world of holiness, and breathe out for the edification of all times the odour of sanctity? How is it with such men as these? Are they all of one mind, with the Society of Friends? Do they hold all the propositions of Robert Barclay? Or shall we say, that Fenelon was weak and wicked; that Thomas-a-Kempis was insincere and unspiritual; or that St. Francis de Sales and Louis de Blois were inspired by the Devil, instead of by the HOLY GHOST? Had not these men spiritual senses to taste and savour the things of the Spirit? Oh! it is answered, these men had a measure of light vouchsafed to them, but the errors and prejudices of their times, and their education, were too strong to allow them to adopt the truth in all its simplicity. What, then, was George Fox without prejudice? Had Robert Barclay and William Penn no peculiarities of temper or education that could by possibility misguide and delude them? Or does it come to this, that the Holy Spirit is indeed the guide, but that every man follows it, as his prejudices, temper, education, and habits allow him? that the devoutest and most spiritual men, following in all sincerity and humility the revelations of truth within them, are, of necessity, led into radical differences of opinion, and consequently, that this guidance does *not* preserve men from radical errors? Must a man be more spiritual, and less prejudiced, than Fenelon, before he can be assured that he is led infallibly by the Holy Spirit? Of a truth, this is not a doctrine or a rule adapted to the mass of mankind. Fenelon believed (and every Catholic believes) that he was taught by the HOLY GHOST to have faith in the authority of the Church, and the doctrine of transubstantiation. Fenelon did not merely assent to these doctrines because he had been brought up in them. He believed (and every Catholic believes) that these doctrines were especially revealed to himself, and that without that Revelation he could not be a Catholic. If Fenelon, and Thomas-a-Kempis, erred so grievously, what assurance have I, or has any man, that he shall be more favoured? Robert Barclay observes, that there is a difference between

saying that the guide is infallible, and saying that a particular man is led by that infallible guide; and that the former proposition only is asserted by Friends, and the latter not. The observation is no doubt true; but then, be it remembered, that every Catholic asserts the former proposition; indeed it would be blasphemous to deny it; and as to the latter, the Catholic asserts that no man has assurance of his being infallibly led, except so far as he keeps himself within the teaching and discipline of the Church.

Robert Barclay assures us, that Friends are willing to submit to the test of Scripture, and to acknowledge that every pretended Revelation, which is not consistent with Scripture, is a delusion of the Devil. Strange reasoning! The Scripture is too uncertain and doubtful to be the rule itself, but it is, nevertheless, the test of the application of the more perfect rule. Suppose a man asserts that he has a revelation of the mere humanity of our SAVIOUR; what is the proof of the delusion? Scripture? He asserts that he has the Scripture with him, and quotes CHRIST's own words, "My Father is greater than I." Here is no test, no certainty, whatever. The same difficulty occurs as to the thousand other questions which have been raised out of the New Testament. Fenelon believed, and all Catholics believe, that the tenets of the Catholic faith, which Friends deny, are contained in the Scripture; Baptism, Transubstantiation, Extreme Unction, Confession, Purgatory, Invocation of Saints, are all proved out of Scripture. I say, then, that it is obviously untrue that the Holy Spirit has been promised to Christians as an infallible guide, and to supersede the necessity of an outward teaching. If the humblest devotion, and the sincerest piety, cannot secure a man from the deepest delusions (as every Friend must, in common charity, admit, in the cases of Fenelon and Thomas-a-Kempis), what is meant by the infallible guidance of the Holy Spirit? Every man's religion still depends, and must necessarily depend, on education, habit, prejudice, and peculiarity of character. Infallible and certain guidance there is none. The principle of sect-making remains. The human finite mind is still made judge over the Revelations of the Infinite. The fundamental principle of Friends has vanished; sects, divisions, doubt, and uncertainty, are once more triumphant and paramount. What, then, of necessity, was the course to be adopted by one who felt all this strongly; who felt firmly attached to the fundamental principle of the So-

ciety, and who saw also what nine Friends out of ten in the present day will admit, that no following of the inward teaching can secure men against diversity of opinion, arising from prejudice and custom? For my part, I cannot renounce the grand truth on which Quakerism is built. I cannot give myself up to the guidance of the human understanding. I cannot adopt any principle that leads inevitably to disunion. In short, true to the grand doctrine of Friends, I could not but still continue my search for some principle that might conduct me into certainty, and which, if followed, might lead mankind in general into unity and concord. This I have done. Compelled either to renounce the grand basis of Quakerism, or a part of the superstructure, which cannot both stand together, I have chosen the latter; and I contend that I remain far truer to the original design and institution of Quakerism, than those Friends—now everywhere to be met with—who renounce the former, and admit the continued existence of sects to be natural, necessary, inevitable, and a part of the original design of Christianity; who believe that men must follow their own judgments, and have been left without any guide whatever that can lead them out of discord into unity.

Robert Barclay admits that there is no alternative between Quakerism and Catholicism. Either, he says, a man must believe in the inspiration and canonical authority of the Epistle of St. James on the infallible teaching of the Holy Spirit, or on the infallible teaching of the Church of Rome. "Let them find a mean if they can." It is true; there is no mean; and a person who does not see sufficient evidence of the infallibility of the rule propounded by Friends, has no alternative, unless he renounces Friends' principles far more completely than I have done, but to pass at once to Catholicism. I perfectly agree with Robert Barclay, that there is no mean between Quakerism and Catholicism. I have chosen the latter; and in this day of general defection, surely the person who, out of all those who are dissatisfied with Friends, has adopted the only alternative which the founders of the Society acknowledged to be tenable, is, of all others, entitled to a fair and dispassionate consideration.

Feeling, then, very strongly that the doctrine of Friends does not fulfil its own requirements, that the guidance of the Holy Spirit, though real and undoubted in itself, was yet not intended, without other help, to keep mankind in unity, "speaking the same thing, having no divisions among them,

perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment,"* I could not but inquire whether there were not some other provision in the Christian scheme for attaining this end, which we are agreed in considering as so indispensable. I could not but bear in mind that the Apostle denounces heresy and schism as *crimes*, as grievous *sins*,† not in the Protestant fashion, as errors of judgment. I could not but recollect that the disciple of love, writing to the elect lady, enjoins her,‡ if any came to her, not having the doctrine of CHRIST, not to receive him into her house, neither bid him God speed; for he that biddeth him God speed is a partaker of his evil deeds. And though I perceived, from the language of St. Paul, that this severity was to be used, not to those *without* the Christian Church, but to those who *had* been within, and had fallen away into heresy or schism,§ (for what have I to do, says he, to judge them that are without?) yet when I called to mind the awful sentence, that if an Angel from Heaven should preach any other doctrine than that of CHRIST he was to be anathema, I saw clearly that if the crime of swerving from the doctrine of CHRIST be so fearful, there must have been some means established, whereby humble and sincere men might be secured from falling into so grievous a transgression. I saw most evidently, that in the very essence of the Christian scheme, there must, in the nature of things, be a clear means whereby the faithful were "to be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine;"|| and that the true Christian is one who receives and believes, not one who receives and criticizes.

And here I could not but be struck with the fact, that though the teaching of the Holy Spirit, in the secret of the heart, had been the ordinance of God for all men since the creation of the world; and if God had been so minded, this inward teaching might have sufficed to lead men into all truth, without the need of any outward instruction whatever, yet the order of God's providence hath been otherwise. For the very essence of the Christian scheme is, that it is an outward revelation, conducting us to the inward guidance. The HOLY GHOST might, if he should so decree, make each of us perfect on the instant. But He hath not so willed. He might

* 1 Cor. i. 10.

† Gal. v. 19, &c.

‡ 2 John, 9, 10, 11.

§ 1 Cor. v. 12.

|| Ephes. iv. 14.

lead us into all truth by His inward invisible operation on our hearts, without the help of external instruction. But He hath not so willed. He hath, by the very terms of the Revelation itself, subjected us to an outward teaching. What then? Will the outward teaching, whatever it may be, avail anything, without the inward quickening? By no means; no more than the preaching of St. Paul availed his hearers, without the co-operation of the HOLY GHOST. But, nevertheless, the preaching of St. Paul was the appointed means for bringing them to salvation. It was the *necessary* means; necessary, not to GOD; not as if GOD could not convert them without this outward instruction; but necessary to them, necessary because the means appointed by GOD. And as it was with the first Christians, so it is with us; an outward teaching is necessary; not as if GOD needed the means, but because GOD hath appointed it as a means whereby we are to be brought to a knowledge of the truth. And it seemed obvious to me, that if men, following the inward teaching with sincerity, may yet so far differ as to render communion and unity impossible; and if all members of the Church are enjoined to preserve this unity under an anathema; and if outward means are in the order of GOD's providence necessary to our instruction, then some outward infallible guidance there must needs be, to save the souls of men from an eternal uncertainty, about matters of which the certainty has been indubitably revealed.

But here I was, in the outset, encountered by a principle well known to members of the Society of Friends, which, though not directly bearing upon this branch of the subject, yet, if true, would at once cut us off from all possibility of any certain teaching from without. It is a well-known principle of Friends, that the government and administration of the Church are so entirely inward, that all outward ordinances whatever, even baptism and the LORD'S Supper, are inconsistent with the entire spirituality of the Gospel. Now, I felt that either this principle is unsound, or all the churches in the world from the apostolical times downwards, must have erred most grievously in a very fundamental point. What degree of certainty or unity can be looked for from the admission of a principle which charged the whole Christian Church for eighteen centuries, with an entire misconception of the essential nature of CHRIST'S Gospel? The principle, however, is endeavoured to be established, first, by general

reasoning, and then by arguments, which go to negative the establishment of the two outward rites, which are most generally admitted among Christians, and which are thought to be supported by the most specious evidence. Let us hear on this subject Joseph John Gurney, the latest and the most learned living defender of the principles of Friends.

"Although,"* says he, "it is almost universally allowed among Christians, that when the new covenant was established in the world, by the death of CHRIST, the ceremonial observances of the Jewish law were abolished, there are two religious rites of a very similar description, the maintenance of which is still very generally insisted upon as necessary to the edification and true order of the Church of CHRIST." These are baptism and the sacrament of the LORD's Supper. † "These ceremonies are considered by very many Christians, to be especially means of grace, or mediums through which grace is conveyed to the soul." "It is undeniable that these rites, as they are now observed, are of *precisely the same nature* as the ceremonies of the ancient Jews. They are actions indifferent in themselves, employed as religious forms, . . . and like those Jewish ceremonies, they are mere types or shadows, representing in a figurative manner, certain great particulars of Christian truth. It is plain, therefore, that the *principle* on which these practices are founded, appertains to the old covenant."‡

One reflection forces itself on our notice in reading these sentences, which goes to the foundation of the whole question. It is, that the former and the latter portions contradict each other. These rites as they are now observed in the Catholic Church, among the Anglicans, the Greeks, the Russians, and other Eastern heretics (that is, among two-thirds of the Christian world), are, as J. J. Gurney accurately expresses it, "mediums through which grace is conveyed to the soul." They are *not*, then, as he describes them in the next sentence, "Like the Jewish ceremonies, mere types or shadows, representing in a figurative manner, certain great particulars of Christian truth." These statements cannot *both* be accurate. Baptism cannot be both a medium of grace, and a mere type. It cannot be both an instrument established by CHRIST to convey into the hearts of men the spirit which he has promised, and a mere type representing something, but conveying or affecting no-

* Observations on the Religious Peculiarities of Friends, p. 60.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid. p. 66.

thing. It cannot be both a Christian sacrament and a mere Jewish type, because the two things are fundamentally different. The truth is, that there is as much difference (in reality *more*) between the Christian baptism and the Jewish washings, as between the Jewish typical washings, and washing one's face every morning; and it would be as proper to say that CHRIST has abolished personal cleanliness, because he took away the Jewish washings, as to say that he has abolished the Christian sacrament of baptism for the same reason. The Jewish baptism was a type, a mere sign, and was abolished by CHRIST with the whole Mosaical law. The Christian baptism is a sacrament, a means or instrument of grace, and was not abolished by CHRIST, because it was by him first instituted. At least, I thought it clear, that when the question is, whether CHRIST has appointed baptism as a means of conveying the Holy Ghost, before we decide in the negative, we require some further proof than the admitted fact of the abrogation of the Jewish ceremonies, which were not means of conveying the Holy Ghost at all.

This misconception runs through the whole of J. J. Gurney's argument. He takes infinite pains, and spends great learning, in establishing the existence of baptism as a ceremonial figurative ordinance among the Jews, and in showing that the whole Jewish ceremonial was abolished, and a worship of substance, of real graces and spiritualities, substituted for the old figures. Now, this is a point about which we are agreed. The Jewish ceremonial and the Christian sacrament are fundamentally distinct. The abolition of the one is a necessary preliminary to the establishment of the other. "He taketh away the first that he may establish the second." CHRIST tells the woman of Samaria that the time is at hand when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth. In this passage, says J. J. Gurney,* there is an evident allusion to a change from one system of worship and one dispensation, to another. The new worship "Was to be carried on, not through the old medium of types and figures, but by the application to the heart of the great and essential truths of the Gospel dispensation; for the type was now to be exchanged for the antitype, the figure for the thing figured; the shadow for the substance."† Now, as these are the very points, which of all others, the believer in the sacraments desires to have clearly established as the very

* Ibid. p. 62.

† Ibid. p. 63.

foundation of his belief, it seemed to me that little weight was to be given to them as arguments against the sacraments. The words of CHRIST to the woman of Samaria *do* point to a change from one dispensation to another, and that change *was* from ceremonial and merely typical ordinances, which dimly prefigured the good things to come, to a worship in spirit and in truth, which involved the abolition of all the old types, and consisted in the application to the heart of the great and essential truths of the Gospel dispensation. The belief in the Christian sacraments cannot stand, unless these propositions can be clearly established.

All the passages in the Epistles to the Hebrews and Galatians, and elsewhere, quoted by J. J. Gurney, to prove the abolition of the Jewish ceremonies and types, are at once admitted by the believer in the sacraments. "When the Messiah was come—when he had revealed the spiritual character of his own dispensation—when he had died for our sins—when he had risen again for our justification—when he had shed forth on his disciples the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit—then were all the types fulfilled; *then was the law of types abolished.*"* This I take to be a very pointed and accurate exposition of the Catholic doctrine. The Catholic believes that Christ established in his Church no ordinance whatever which was a mere type, a shadow of good things to come, a dim prefiguration of something not yet revealed, a mere figurative sign. He has left us at perfect liberty to use such outward symbols as tend to our edification, but he has abolished the whole law of types, and has substituted in its place the law of sacraments, in other words, the law of grace. He has taken away the shadow to establish the substance.

The importance and the certainty of the abolition of the law of types, and the substitution of the law of grace, weigh so strongly on J. J. Gurney's mind, that in all those passages in which baptism by water is spoken of as commanded by CHRIST, or is spoken of by the Apostles as an instrument of regeneration, he thinks the word is to be taken as a mere metaphor, or figurative mode of expression. And if we were reduced to the alternative of determining between a mere typical rite and a mere spiritual grace, the Catholic might be inclined to adopt the same interpretation. But it is no such thing. The believer in the sacraments does not believe baptism to be a mere type.

* Ibid. p. 64.

In such passages as (Titus iii. 4, &c.), where St. Paul describes the converts as saved, not by works of righteousness which they have done, "but by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost," the Catholic has no difficulty in agreeing with J. J. Gurney,* that "the Apostle is promulgating a doctrine entirely spiritual."

Before Christ left the world he promised his disciples the gift of the HOLY GHOST, the graces of the Spirit, which were to be sufficient for their guidance through life. But though he promised these graces freely and amply, he did not promise that they should be poured out equally at all times, and in all places. First of all, the Apostles were ordered not to depart from Jerusalem,† but to wait for the promise of the FATHER, the HOLY GHOST, which descended upon them at the day of Pentecost. Here the Holy Spirit was freely imparted, but with a command to wait for the gift in a certain place. A peculiar outpouring of grace is promised to those who worship in common. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Prayer is not necessary to make known our desires to the ALMIGHTY; but yet "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." Moreover, there is a greater measure of grace awarded to a number praying together than to the prayer of a solitary devotee. "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my FATHER which is in Heaven." We can help one another with our prayers. Thus a grace may be, and often is, poured upon one man as a reward for the prayers of another, though there is no necessary connexion between the need or the merit of the person on whom the grace is poured, and the prayer of the suppliant. In short, innumerable instances might be adduced to shew, that the Grace of God, though given freely, is yet made by the good pleasure of God to run in certain fixed and stated channels: and, that outward acts, which seem to have no connexion whatever with the heart or disposition of the receiver of the grace, are often made necessary antecedents to its reception. There would seem to be no connexion between the merit of a tribe of savages, and the landing of a missionary in an island of the South Seas. Their need and their merit or demerit are the same, whether he land there or not. But who doubts that the labours and teaching of the missionary may convert many

* Ibid. p. 84.

† Acts, chap. i. 4, 5.

a sinner, and redeem him from the jaws of hell? The whole economy of the Gospel teems with instances of the same kind. It is, then, by no means contrary to the entire spirituality of the Gospel (which I believe as firmly as ever) to suppose, that though God dispenses the gifts of the HOLY GHOST most freely, yet He does so according to stated rules; which rules we are not competent to judge, or to criticize. There is nothing contrary to the entire spirituality of the Gospel in the belief that the Spirit is dispensed freely, but that certain preliminary acts are indispensable conditions for our attainment of it.

Not only is there nothing contrary to the spirit of the Gospel in this, but we know distinctly in the instances which I have mentioned, that it is of the very essence of the Gospel, that it should be so. The condition may appear trifling to us, as did the command of Elisha to Naaman, the Syrian, to wash in Jordan to cure him of his leprosy. "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them and be clean?" But it is not for us to judge the times and the seasons, which the Lord hath kept in his own power. It is not for us to understand why the occasion of grace should be water baptism, or partaking of the Eucharist, any more than why it should be the prayer of a stranger, the landing of a missionary, the tarrying at Jerusalem. There is then nothing unspiritual in the belief that CHRIST established as a perpetual ordinance in his Church, a particular outward act as a means or instrument of grace; and it seems to me a fearful thing, for men in the pride of human reason, to reject an ordinance most clearly commanded, because we cannot perceive the reason why the ordinance and the grace are conjoined. Let it be remembered that if baptism is commanded by CHRIST, it is a fearful thing to disobey his commands.

These are the *general* considerations which induced me to attach little weight to the *general* reasonings of J. J. Gurney, on this subject. I cannot follow him in detail into the examination of particular passages. Even if I had space it would be unprofitable, because his interpretation of the texts, in which there is an allusion to baptism, depends wholly upon the notion, that an outward ceremony, conjoined with, and made the means of conveying, the Grace of God, is the same in principle, with an outward ceremony, connected with no grace whatever, but merely used as a sign; and that a system of ordinances for the transmission of spiritual influ-

ence is unspiritual, in the same manner as a system of ordinances for the transmission of no spiritual influences whatever. Take away this notion of resemblance, where there is the most perfect dissimilarity, and his whole scheme of interpretation falls to the ground. I felt then that the spirituality of the Gospel afforded no objection to the institution of spiritual sacraments. I found, moreover, that CHRIST sent out his disciples to baptize, and they baptized with water under his immediate superintendence. His last command to them is to baptize, and they believe and act upon the belief, that he meant baptism by water. The words of CHRIST and his Apostles, speaking of baptism, contain, as J. J. Gurney admits, allusions to baptism by water, and the Apostles continued all their lives the practice of water baptism, and transmitted it as an ordinance to the Church, by which it has been preserved in an unbroken descent. "The entire spirituality of the new dispensation was very gradually unfolded to the Apostles," says J. J. Gurney.* "It is notorious that many of them adhered with strictness to a great part of the Jewish ritual, long after it was abrogated by the death of CHRIST; and even on the Gentile converts they enjoined an abstinence from things strangled, and from blood, no less imperatively than from the sin of fornication. . . . As long as they observed the ceremonies of the law in their own persons—as long as they continued unprepared for a full reception of the doctrine, that the ordinances and shadows of the law were now to be disused, and that God was to be worshipped in a manner entirely spiritual—so long would they, *as a matter of course*, persevere in the practice of baptizing their converts *in water*. Neither are we to imagine that in this respect the Apostles acted in opposition to the will of their Divine Master, who appears to have imposed upon them no sudden change of conduct respecting ritual observances, but simply to have left them in possession of those great principles of spiritual religion, the tendency of which was to undermine all such observances at the very foundation, and thus in a gradual manner, to effect their abolition."

Strange reasoning! Here, indeed, we behold an imperative motive for the Friends to hold the Scriptures an insufficient guide! According to J. J. Gurney, St. Paul must have been preaching the Gospel several years, at least, without having his

* Ibid. p. 100.

mind prepared for a full reception of the doctrine as to the manner of worshipping God ! Of a truth the chronology of the Epistles requires a close investigation. At what time was the whole Gospel scheme revealed to the Apostles ? Which Epistles were written before, and which after that most desirable consummation ? A new Apocrypha must be prepared ; a new canon established. Or, will any one undertake from his own private inspiration to tell mankind which of the sacred writings may be safely depended on ? Was St. Paul's mind fully prepared when he wrote the Epistle to the Romans ? I should judge not ; for he observed the Jewish law long after. Was St. Peter fully prepared when he wrote his first general Epistle ? I should imagine not either. And, strange to say, the anti-ceremonial Epistle to the Hebrews must go along with them. Nay, the whole Canon itself is an Apocrypha ; for it is as certain as any matter of history, that the Apostles continued the ordinance of baptism till their deaths, and must, therefore, be held, never to have been fully acquainted with the doctrine, in which they were to be the instructors of mankind.

The passage I am commenting on, I take to be a most complete perversion of the Apostolic history as we read it in the Acts ; a perversion, I need not say, made with the most entire good faith. It does not appear that there was any gradual change of doctrine among the Apostles whatever. The very moment the question arose as to the applicability of the Jewish law to the Gentile converts, they decided at once in the negative.

But motives of prudence, applicable to that time only, determined them to recommend an abstinence from things strangled, and from blood, not as part of the Jewish law, but as a prudent accommodation to the times. They themselves, and all the Jewish converts I believe, retained the Jewish law till the destruction of the temple. At the very time St. Paul was incurring the bitterest hatred of the Jews, by preaching the admission of the Gentiles within the pale of the promise, unfettered by the law, he himself was shaving his head at Cenchrea, " for he had a vow ; " was purifying himself in the temple, according to the Jewish rite ; was circumcising Timothy, to shew that he was falsely slandered. It will not do to say that the abrogation of the ceremonial law was gradual. The very moment the question was mooted, it was set at rest permanently, and for ever. It was at once placed on the footing on which it has ever since remained, as regards the Gentiles, that is—

an entire abrogation. There was no wavering in doctrine, whatever there might be in practice, from the timidity of St. Peter, or from a desire, as St. Augustine expresses it, to bury the Synagogue with honour. St. Paul, with his usual decision of character, took his part from the very first moment in doctrine and in practice, and never swerved from it. His rule was from the beginning, entire abrogation as regarded the Gentiles; but he still sanctioned the observance of it by the Jewish converts.

Baptism, says J. J. Gurney, was not to be abrogated at once, but was to die out gradually, was gradually to be undermined by the spiritual law. I am content to put the whole question on this footing. It may seem presumptuous in me to challenge so learned a person as J. J. Gurney, on a matter of church history; but my own belief is, that the point admits of so little doubt, as to absolve me from the charge of presumption entirely. Can a period be named between the death of our SAVIOUR, and the Reformation, as to which there is a tittle of evidence that any person of authority in the church classed baptism with Jewish ordinances, which were gradually to die out? I challenge the production of such a person, and such a time.

It is true, J. J. Gurney does endeavour to shew that the Apostles did not uniformly baptize, and he instances St. Paul, who thanks God that he baptized none of the Corinthians, but a few whom he names; and who gives this reason for it, that CHRIST sent him not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel. I answer, that J. J. Gurney himself admits the probability, (which every thing that we know of the early Christians, converts into an absolute certainty,) that these "converts received baptism at the hands of other persons,"* if not at the hands of St. Paul; just as Cornelius and his household were converted by St. Peter, but were not baptized by him. "He commanded them to be baptized in the name of the LORD." But then, says J. J. Gurney, he states as his reason for not baptizing, that he had received no commission to baptize. "For CHRIST," said he, "sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel." What then, did St. Paul baptize Crispus, and Gaius, and the household of Stephanus, without being commissioned by CHRIST to do so? Was it a mere whim of his own? Surely the mere reading of the passage is sufficient to

* Ibid. p. 102.

prevent the possibility of misconception. The Corinthians had been converted, some by Paul, some by Apollos, some by Cephas; and they began to make divisions; each person professing himself a follower of the Apostle, from whom he had received Christianity. St. Paul blames these divisions, and congratulates himself,—that the converts had not been baptized? No; but—that he himself had not baptized more than a few of them. He abstained, no doubt, because he had employment enough in that which came upon him daily, the care of all the Churches; and he left to others less eminent the performance of a rite, which others were as competent to perform as himself. He now thanks God that he had abstained: and why? “*Lest any should say I baptized in my own name.*” He feared lest the extent of his labours might make it appear that he was preaching a religion of his own, that he was baptizing otherwise than as a servant of CHRIST. “For CHRIST,” says he, “sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel.” I had a peculiar call for a peculiar object. CHRIST invested me with all the powers of an Apostle, of which the administration of baptism was one, but he had a peculiar end in my calling. I was born as it were out of due time, for a peculiar purpose, to perform a particular service. And what service was that? Not baptism; I can baptize neither faster, nor better than the rest of the Apostles, or the Bishops and elders, whom they, and I have ordained; but CHRIST sent me to preach, to convince, to confute. Hence it is, that oppressed with labour, I leave it to others to baptize. I baptize now and then; but as I am not baptizing in my own name, I leave it to others, who are equally with myself ministers of CHRIST, to baptize in *His* name, while I preach the word in season, and out of season; and now seeing the divisions that have arisen, I rejoice the more that I have done so, lest any should say that I baptized in my own name.

Again, J. J. Gurney tells us, that CHRIST himself did not baptize, and that the Apostles were not baptized. Now, the only passage which bears upon this subject (John iv. 2) does not tell us whether the Apostles were baptized or not, (of which I take it we know no more than Tertullian did sixteen centuries ago),* but merely tells us that after CHRIST had appointed twelve disciples to attend on him, he left them the

* On Baptism, chap. 11 and 12.

task of baptizing; and they performed it under his personal superintendence.

Of the sacrament of the Eucharist, I need say the less, because the preceding remarks as to the nature of a sacrament, apply to the Eucharist as well as to baptism. However, I think it necessary to draw even closer attention to the practice of the primitive Christians on this point, because J. J. Gurney* professes to have no very strong objection to being guided by their practice, or adopting the rite in the same manner as they adopted it; that is, as a mere feast of affection, a social meal, commemorative of the Last Supper of our SAVIOUR with his Apostles; rather a pious custom than a religious ceremony. If this be so, the early fathers have certainly taken an extraordinary method of explaining their meaning. Joseph J. Gurney quotes several ancient fathers to establish this "simple practice" of the "primitive Christians." One of the latest of these is Tertullian, whose Treatise "*de coronâ militis*," he tells us, proves that even so late as A. D. 200 the "Eucharist was received by Christians in connection with their meals." The passage he quotes is as follows:—"Eucharistiæ sacramentum *et in tempore victus*, et omnibus mandatum a Domino, etiam antelucanis cætibus, nec de aliorum manu quam præsentium sumimus." The edition of Joseph J. Gurney's work, which I have before me, is the first (1824). I believe there has been one or more subsequent editions, but as I have not a later edition at hand, I cannot tell whether the extraordinary mistake of this note has been corrected. However, as it shews in rather a striking light the fixed determination to prove, with or without good evidence, the point which he has advanced, I shall reason upon it as it stands in the first edition. No person who wished to deceive would make an assertion, and then gratuitously supply evidence of its falsehood. Therefore, and for every other reason, I have not the smallest intention of accusing J. J. Gurney of bad faith in this matter; only it is extraordinary that the Latin sentence here quoted, asserts in the most pointed manner, the very reverse of what J. J. Gurney says it does. And his italic letters shew that he has entirely misconceived its meaning. The literal translation of the sentence is this:—"The sacrament of the Eucharist too, though commanded by the LORD at the time of a meal, and to all, we yet take in our meetings before day-break, and from the hand of

* Pp. 121, 122.

no one other than our presidents." That is, though the Eucharist was instituted at supper time, and though the LORD's words "Do this, &c." are addressed to all the communicants in general, yet we take it in the morning before day-break, and from the hand of our bishop or priest alone:—the very practice of the Catholic Church in the present day. The passage from which this sentence is quoted is an extraordinary one, and well deserving of attention. Tertullian in answer to those who alledge that tradition is not to be received where Scripture has not spoken, answers by adducing a number of customs for which no Scripture can be alledged. Among these are the solemnities observed in baptism, the plunging three times in the water, &c. &c. "The Sacrament of the Eucharist, too," he continues, as in the sentence already quoted. He adds, "We are very much grieved when ever so little of our bread or our wine falls to the ground." So that the practice of taking the Eucharist as a distinct religious solemnity, was believed by Tertullian, (who was born about the time of the martyrdom of St. Polycarp, the disciple of St. John,)* to be a tradition from the Apostles. I have already mentioned the "discipline of the secret," or the habit of the early Christians of concealing carefully from the uninitiated the most mysterious parts of their worship; and the great difficulty which this occasions in ascertaining the entire meaning of the ancient fathers and Christian writers. The passage before us is an instance of this. The writer tells us of the grief of the Christians at letting a crumb or a drop of the consecrated bread and wine fall to the ground, a feeling which afterwards induced the Church to forbid the faithful to communicate in more than one kind, that is, in bread alone. But he does not tell us the ground of that feeling, though it is evident it was quite inconsistent with considering this solemnity as a common supper.

Sometimes, however, where they hoped to be able to allay persecution, the Christian writers would reveal part of the mysterious truth to the ears of their rulers. Hence we find in the Apology of St. Justin Martyr, a description of the "simple practice" of the early Christians in these and some other matters; and I here insert it at large, because, whatever conclusions we draw from it, it proves most clearly that the practice of Friends is fundamentally at variance with that of the primitive times. St. Justin was himself a martyr, and his Apology was written about

* Circ. A. D. 145.

the time of the martyrdom of St. Polycarp, who was appointed Bishop of Smyrna by the Apostle St. John. The testimony of this age then, brings us up to the time of the Apostles themselves. The practice of the Church at that time was a practice taught and sanctioned by men who had been made bishops by the Apostles. It is, first of all, proper to state, that the assemblies of the early Christians were kept secret with such vigilance, that the mystery thence arising, and, perhaps, rumours set afloat by unfaithful and malicious brethren, were made the foundation of the most horrible charges against them. Murder, cannibalism, (evidently pointing at the mysterious eating of the Lord's body), incest—these were the crimes of which they were accused. St. Justin, then, in his Apology addressed to the Antonines, endeavours to set at rest all these wicked slanders, by a simple detail of some portion of the Christian practices. I look upon it as a little unfair, that J. J. Gurney, in professing to give an account of the primitive practice, has omitted all mention of an unexceptionable witness, earlier than some others whom he has quoted, and one who completely overturns everything that he has told us on the subject.*

“We will also state in what manner we are created anew by CHRIST, and have dedicated ourselves to God; that we may not, by omitting this, appear to dissemble anything in our explanation. As many as are persuaded, and believe that the things which we teach and declare are true, and promise that they are determined to live accordingly, are taught to pray, and to beseech God with fasting, to grant them remission of their past sins, while we also pray and fast with them. We then lead them to a place where there is water, and there they are regenerated in the same manner as we also were: for they are then washed in that water, in the name of God the Father and Lord of the Universe, and of our Saviour JESUS CHRIST, and of the Holy Spirit. For CHRIST said, ‘Except ye be born again, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven;’ and, that it is impossible, that those who are once born should again enter into their mothers’ wombs, is evident to all. Moreover, it is declared by the Prophet Isaiah, &c. &c.

“The Apostles have also taught us for what reason this new birth is necessary. Since at our first birth we were born without our knowledge or consent, by the ordinary natural means, and were brought up in bad habits and evil instructions, in

* Apology, chap. 79. Translation by the Rev. F. Chevalier, Cambridge, 1833.

order that we may no longer remain the children of necessity or of ignorance, but may become the children of choice and judgment, and may obtain in the water remission of the sins which we have before committed, the name of God the Father and Lord of the Universe is pronounced over him who is willing to be born again, and hath repented of his sins. . . . And this washing is called illumination, since the minds of those who are thus instructed are enlightened. And he who is so enlightened is baptized also in the name of JESUS CHRIST, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and in the name of the Holy Spirit, who by the prophets foretold all things concerning JESUS."*

"We, then, after having so washed him, who hath expressed his conviction, and professes the faith, lead him to those who are called brethren, where they are gathered together to make common prayers with great earnestness, both for themselves and for him who is now enlightened, and for all others in all places, &c. When we have finished our prayers, we salute one another with a kiss. After which there is brought to that one of the brethren who presides, bread and a cup of wine mixed with water. And he having received them, gives praise and glory to the Father of all things, through the name of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and gives thanks in many words for that God hath vouchsafed to them these things. And when he hath finished his praises and thanksgiving, all the people who are present express their assent, saying, Amen, which in the Hebrew tongue implies, So be it. The President having given thanks, and the people having expressed their assent, those whom we call deacons give to each of those who are present, a portion of the bread which hath been blessed, and of the wine mixed with water, and carry some away for those who are absent.†

"And this food is called by us the Eucharist (or Thanksgiving), of which no one may partake unless he believes that which we teach is true, and is washed in the laver, which is appointed for the forgiveness of sins and unto regeneration, and lives in such a manner as CHRIST commanded. For we receive not these elements as common bread or common drink. But even as JESUS CHRIST our Saviour, being made flesh by the word of God, had both flesh and blood for our salvation, even so we are taught that the food which is blessed by the prayer of the word which came from him, by the conversion

* Ibid. chap. 80.

† Ibid. c. 85.

of which (into our bodily substance) our blood and flesh is nourished, is the flesh and blood of that Jesus, who was made flesh. For the Apostles, in the Memoirs composed by them, which are called Gospels, have related, &c.”*

“ And over all our offerings we bless the Creator of all things, through his Son **JESUS CHRIST**, and through the Holy Spirit. And on the day which is called Sunday, there is an assembly in one place of all who dwell either in towns or in the country ; and the Memoirs of the Apostles, or the writings of the prophets, are read as long as the time permits. Then the President delivers a discourse, &c. We then all stand up together, and put forth prayers. Then, as we have already said, when we cease from prayer, bread is brought, and wine and water ; and the President, in like manner, offers up prayers and praises with his utmost power, and the people express their assent by saying Amen. The consecrated elements are then distributed and received by every one, and a portion is sent by the deacons to those who are absent.”

Hear to the same effect St. Ignatius, appointed Bishop of Antioch, by St. Peter.† “ They who are of a different opinion from us abstain from the Eucharist, and from the public offices (or prayers) ; because they confess not the Eucharist to be the flesh of our Saviour **JESUS CHRIST**, which suffered for our sins, and which the Father of his goodness raised again from the dead. And from this cause contradicting the gift of God, they die in their disputes.” “ Wherefore let it be your endeavour to partake all of the same holy Eucharist ; for there is but one flesh of our **LORD JESUS CHRIST**, and one cup in the unity of his blood ; one altar ; as also there is one bishop, &c. &c.”‡ Again, “ All come together in common in one faith, breaking one and the same bread, which is the medicine of immortality, our antidote that we should not die, but live for ever in **JESUS CHRIST**.”§ In conclusion I must quote one passage from this last Epistle, which will shew clearly what doctrine St. Peter, (who saw in the deluge of Noah a type of the regeneration of Christians through baptism,) taught his disciples and the bishops whom he appointed to succeed him. “ Where is the boasting of those who are called wise ? For our **LORD JESUS CHRIST** was according to the dispensation of God, conceived in the womb of Mary, of the seed of David, by the **HOLY GHOST**. He was born and baptized, that through

* Ibid. c. 86.

† Epist. ad Philadelph.

‡ Epist. ad Smyrna.

§ Epist. ad Ephes.

his passion *he might purify water to the washing away of sin.*" Joseph J. Gurney thinks that Christian ministers follow the example of CHRIST, in refusing to baptize. The apostles and their disciples, on the other hand, believed that CHRIST in being baptized gave us the example we ought to follow.

I wish to repeat again, that I am not here endeavouring to establish the Catholic doctrine of either of these sacraments. For that I must refer to the works I have already quoted. My object simply is to shew, why, in my search after some infallible guide, the doctrine of Friends, as to the inconsistency of every outward ordinance with the spirituality of the Gospel, seemed to me unfounded, and why I was not deterred by it from prosecuting my enquiry as to whether CHRIST had not instituted a visible Church with authority to teach, confirmed by a promise of his perpetual guidance. For I saw clearly that either it must have been so, or else there is nothing to give that certainty which Friends so loudly contend for; the perpetual teaching of CHRIST, and the guiding of the Holy Spirit into all truth must have failed; CHRIST's promises cannot be Yea and Amen for ever.

However, though I saw by the express language of the sacred writings, and the universal consent of every monument of primitive times to which I had access, that there were outward institutions of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and though convinced that these outward institutions could not be mere types or signs, like the Jewish ceremonies, but must, if of Divine institution under the new law, form an essential part of the administration and economy of grace, I was yet perplexed to discover the terms and conditions of this economy. I saw that baptism was an ordinance of CHRIST, and I was told by CHRIST himself of some mysterious union between the outward washing of water and the regeneration of the Holy Spirit, but the nature and extent of that union I saw no where distinctly laid down. I read of the institution of the Eucharist, and perceived from the language of St. Paul, that it was a perpetual ordinance of CHRIST, mysteriously united, under some condition or other, with the spiritual nourishment of the believer's soul. But here, as before, I did not understand the terms or conditions of that union.

When I looked more closely into the New Testament, I discovered in passages that I had been accustomed to pass over as unimportant, stronger and stronger traces of outward institutions; that is of the highest spiritual discipline through the in-

tervention and agency of the outward world of sense. Take, for instance, works of outward mortification. In the Old Testament fasting and bodily humiliation are constantly represented to us, not as part of the typical law, but as a useful means of attaining spiritual renovation in cases of sin and sorrow, by the very constitution of man's nature. When the child of David's sin* was threatened with death, David besought the LORD for the child, and he fasted, and went in and lay all night upon the earth, in hopes that the Lord might be gracious to him, and the child might live. It is unnecessary to mention any other instances of the same kind in the Old Testament. They are very numerous, and are mostly acts of voluntary humiliation, unconnected with the Mosaic law, but springing spontaneously from the universal nature of man. When we come to the New Testament, the same state of things is observable. Of those who have been born of woman said our SAVIOUR, there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist. Now, John the Baptist led a life of mortification. He had his raiment of camel's hair and a leather girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey. Our Saviour himself, whose life was a perfect pattern to us, fasted for forty days. The disciples of John the Baptist fasted, and though CHRIST's disciples fasted not while he was with them, yet he predicted that when He, the bridegroom, should be taken away, they should then fast. Accordingly we find that the Apostle who has written most strongly against Jewish ordinances, yet tells the Corinthians,† that it is good to abstain from certain pleasures altogether, if possible; but where, as is frequently the case, it is impossible, he yet enjoins them to abstain for a time, and give themselves to fasting and prayer. Moreover, I found that the Apostles established in the Church the festival of Easter in commemoration of our LORD's resurrection from the dead, and that from the earliest times this festival was preceded by a fast in commemoration of our LORD's fast in the wilderness. In the time of St. Polycarp, who was appointed Bishop of Smyrna by St. John, there was a dispute between the Eastern and Western Churches, as to the time of observing this festival of Easter, with which the Lent fast terminated. The Eastern Churches alleged that their method was instituted by St. John, and the Western Churches that they derived theirs from St. Peter and St. Paul. St. Polycarp was the advocate of the Eastern

* 2 Sam. xii., 15—23.

† 1 Cor. vii. 1.

Churches in this matter, and he visited Rome and adjusted the dispute in a friendly conference with the Pope, who allowed St. Polycarp to administer the Eucharist in his own church. It was impossible, therefore, for me to doubt that these outward institutions were of Apostolic origin ; though here, as before, I seemed to have no guidance as to the nature or circumstances of the fast.

The Mosaic Sabbath was abolished, but I found its place in part supplied by assemblies on the first day of the week, to commemorate the resurrection of our SAVIOUR. And though St. Paul reproved those who observed days and months and times, Sabbaths, and new moons, yet it was not difficult to understand, that it was the observance of the Jewish times that St. Paul censures ; and I learned in a passage of the Epistle of St. Ignatius, the disciple of St. Peter, to the Magnesians, a strong warning as to the danger of rashly subjecting Scripture to my own private interpretation. For there the design of St. Paul is clearly, though accidentally laid open, the Bishop of Antioch describing the Jewish converts, as “ persons who though brought up in the old laws, yet came to the newness of hope ; *no longer observing Sabbaths but keeping the Lord's day*. But here, as before, though I saw the LORD's day was set apart by Apostolic direction, I was yet ignorant of the full scope of the institution ; how far it was subject to the strictness of the Mosaic law ; or how far the aim of it was different from, and consequently, the rules by which it was to be guided were other than, those of the Sabbath.

Take another instance. In the 1st Epistle of St. John, 1 cap. 9 v., I find the Apostle lays down the means of obtaining forgiveness for sin. “ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” Here, then, we see the road to forgiveness lies through confession. But confession to whom ? To God ? To man ? or if to man, to what man, or what set of men ? Protestants assert confidently that the Apostle means confession to God only. But this is mere unauthorized assertion. The Apostle does not say so. He merely tells us that the way to obtain forgiveness is by confession. On this all-important subject he gives no explanation whatever. Conscious it should seem that his readers who had the benefit of oral instruction, understood his meaning, he leaves the matter in doubt. Some light is thrown on the subject by turning to the Acts, xix. 18, where we read that many of the Ephesians “ that believed,

came and *confessed, and shewed their deeds.*" Here we have an outward confession, a confession to men. Still the subject remains in an unsatisfactory state, though a certain presumption is laid for believing that the Apostle may have meant not a mere confession to God, but something more. This presumption is turned to an absolute certainty by the express injunction of the Apostle James ;* "confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed." Thus we see, it is no mere inward acknowledgment that is enjoined, but an outward confession. But then, I enquire who shall tell me the limits, the entire purpose of this outward confession ; its consequences and the person to whom it is to be made ? Here as before, the Apostle certain of being understood by his readers, is not careful to explain himself. It is as if he had told us expressly, "If you wish for full and entire explanation, you must look elsewhere than in my epistle."

When, however, from these Scriptures we turn to the early Christian writers, we find the principle of outward confession confirmed, and the practice explained in greater detail. Thus Tertullian tells us,† that in the case of sins after baptism, repentance alone will not avail. There must be a confession to men ; the penitent must throw himself at the feet of the priest, and even in public, in some cases, must confess his faults, with tears and humiliation ; and he denominates Baptism and Confession, the two planks of our salvation in the shipwreck of sin.‡ St. Cyprian§ tells those who have fallen into sin, even in thought, that they must come with humility and sincerity to the priests and confess their sins, and seek the remedy appointed by God ; and he exhorts them to confess now while they are alive, while their works of satisfaction and the remission of their sins by the priest can benefit them.

Again ; looking back two or three verses from the text last cited, I read as follows :|| "Is any sick among you ? let him call for the elders of the Church ; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil, in the name of the LORD ; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the LORD shall raise him up ; and if he have committed sins they shall be forgiven him." What is the meaning of all this ? If I am on a bed of sickness, what shall I do ? By the common consent of Protestants, I should use my own private judgment, and act as I feel

* St. James, v. 16.

† Tertullian on Penitence, ch. ix., to the end.

‡ Ch. xii.

§ De Lapsis.

|| St. James, v. 14, &c.

most inclined; but one thing I should *not* do. I should not get the elders of the Church to anoint me with oil in the name of the LORD. I should not do as the Apostle commands me, because that would be a piece of papistical superstition. Now, exercising my own private judgment, I felt strongly inclined to do exactly as the Apostle orders, and my only difficulty was to know who the elders of the Church might be.

Again; we may read how St. Paul made use of an outward ceremony in ordaining Timothy;* for he reminds him of "the gift of God, which is in thee by the *imposition of my hands*." And the same Apostle, instructing Timothy to be cautious in ordaining Ministers, tells him "to lay hands suddenly on no man,"† and commands him in a sort of last dying injunction to "commit the things thou hast heard of me to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."‡ Titus also he enjoins to "ordain elders in every city."§ Timothy and Titus moreover were not entitled to a mere voluntary obedience from the faithful. They were to exercise authority, to reprove, rebuke, exhort. They were to "*command*," as well as "*teach*."|| They were to "rebuke with all authority," to "rebuke sharply."¶ They were to receive accusations against elders; and to judge** and expel heretics.†† In short, they were to be not merely preachers to and advisers of, those over whom they were appointed bishops, but they were to rule and govern with a perfect plenitude of power. As to Timothy and Titus there is not the slightest room for doubt. Still, it might be questioned whether those whom, according to the direction of the Apostle, they were to ordain as bishops and elders, were to have similar powers. Here again the answer is at hand in the negative; but the proof to support the answer is not so clear. One thing must strike every one, as admitting of no contradiction, that there is abundant proof that the Apostles established a completely organized system of Church government; though what that system was, I could by no means satisfactorily explain to myself.

Besides these instances of outward institutions, I found a great variety of powers given to the Apostles, of which I knew not how to determine whether they expired with the lives of the Apostles, or were intended to be standing ordinances in the Church. With regard to baptism, no one doubts that if it was

* 2 Tim., i. 6. † 1 Tim. v. 22. ‡ 2 Tim., ii. 2. § Tit., i. 5. || 1 Tim., iv. 11.

¶ Titus, ii. 15—i. 13. ** 1 Tim., v. 19. †† Titus, iii. 10.

the duty of the Apostles to baptize, it was also the duty of properly authorized ministers throughout all time; and yet here the injunction is only to the Apostles, and not to their successors. In like manner with the Eucharist, St. Luke and St. Paul relate that CHRIST said to his Apostles, "Do this in remembrance of me," and St. Paul seems to consider this command as extending beyond the individual Apostles. How then was I to tell whether the powers of binding and loosing, of forgiving and retaining sins, are powers personal to the Apostles, or are standing ordinances in the Church?

In all these things I saw abundant evidence of outward institutions, but I saw no evidence whatever of an intention on the part of the sacred writers to explain their meaning fully. I said to myself, "Here is a case in which if it were a matter of no moment, every sane man would admit his ignorance, would admit that he had no evidence to guide him, upon which he could place any certain reliance. But because it is a matter of religion, and because Protestantism has sanctioned and enthroned 'that last extravagance, the making a religion of independence,' men are cozened into the belief that the Scriptures are clear and explicit, (though the Apostles evidently had no intention of making them explicit); and that every unlearned and unskilful man is bound to consider himself capable of being a doctor, and a proficient, in that on which the wisest and most pious men have been differing ever since the time of the Reformation."

Here I remained in a most grievous perplexity until I began to perceive that I was studying the Bible at the wrong end. I at length began to discover that the early Christians used their Scriptures in no such fashion as I had been taught to use mine. They had around them institutions established by the Apostles, articles of faith handed down by the Apostles, or received from the lips of the Apostles, and they used their Scriptures not as the proofs and grounds of their faith, but as inspired commentaries on the faith which they had already received.* They read in St. John and St. James, "Confess

* "To all these corrupters of the Gospel" (heretics who altered and corrupted the text of Scripture), "we oppose the invincible argument of prescription; that the only true religion is that which was taught by JESUS CHRIST, and has been transmitted to us by his Apostles, who were before all these innovators."—Tertullian's Apology, c. 47. Tertullian's treatise on Prescriptions was written expressly to establish this doctrine. Hear also, St. Irenæus (the disciple of St. Polycarp, the disciple of St. John), in his third book against heresies. "What

your sins," "Confess your faults one to another," but they had not, as we have, to enquire painfully into the Apostles' meaning. They knew that the command referred to the custom instituted by the Apostles, and in practice every day around them. They read the injunction to anoint the sick with oil, and to pray over them. They needed no written explanation to tell them that the order which each of them had seen observed at the death-bed of his father, or mother, or wife, was the custom to which the Apostle referred. They had amongst them the institution of the Eucharist; they did not need a detailed interpretation of words, the meaning of which was embodied in the daily practice of their lives. They had among them the institution of baptism. They knew from the lips of the Apostles the meaning of our Lord, when he commanded his Apostles to baptise. They read the Scriptures, not to ascertain the nature of Baptism, the Eucharist, Confession, and the rest, but that they might be edified in the use they made of these institutions; that they might be stirred up, not to omit confession, to receive the Eucharist with solemnity and devoutness, not to throw away the graces they had received in baptism. They read them for edification, not for systematic detailed explanation. They knew well that much must have passed at that Last Supper, between our SAVIOUR and his Apostles, which the latter had nowhere recorded; and they read the relations as they were written, not as a complete account of everything that occurred, not as a detailed explanation of everything connected with the rite then instituted, but as an impressive narrative of the event which had witnessed the institution of the rite, then universally established.

Only imagine a Gentile convert, a bishop, who has had enjoined upon him the rite of baptism, the moment the Gospel of St. Matthew makes its appearance, appealing from the Apostle to his own writings, and telling him, "You are deceived. Our Divine Master instituted no outward baptism. He only said baptize. The word water is not even mentioned. I see well,

should we have done if the Apostles had left us no writings? We should certainly have followed this channel of tradition. As many barbarous nations possess the faith without the use of writing, who would stop their ears were they to hear the blasphemies of the heretics, who, on the contrary, have nothing but the novelty of their doctrine to shew; for the Valentinians were not before Valentinus, nor the Marcionites before Marcion. All these arose much too late." Yet these were some centuries before Luther.

Holy Apostle, that you are not yet free from a hankering after the carnal ordinance of your Jewish law. You have imposed upon us (with good intentions, I dare say); but yet I cannot consent to have my Christian liberty abridged by this carnal apprehension of yours. You must excuse me; your own Gospel is against you; the word water is not in the text." How would the Apostle have answered such a primitive discourse as this? Is it too presumptuous to imagine that he might have gently reminded the convert of those other words of our SAVIOUR, addressed to his Apostles, "He that receiveth you, receiveth me, and he that despiseth you, despiseth me."

The books, then, of the New Testament, were not written to teach those who had no other source of instruction. They were written to furnish a sort of historic ground to, or commentary on, a practice and faith which the Christians had received from another source; from the oral teaching of the Apostles, or from the institutions established by them, and the traditions embodied in those institutions. They were *written* as commentaries on another teaching. They were *received* as commentaries on another teaching. And no person *can* adequately appreciate them, unless he puts himself in the position of those to whom they were originally addressed; unless he can say, I derive my faith from a source of equal authority, and I receive the Scriptures as a Divine commentary on what God has taught me by another teaching. When, at length, I came clearly to perceive this, the mist began to roll away from my eyes. I saw that in my efforts to interpret the Bible for myself, I had been making an attempt which must end in failure. I saw that I must renounce all attempts to explain the Scriptures myself, and that I must endeavour to place myself in the situation of the primitive Christians, and receive them as an inspired commentary, rather than an all-sufficient guide. When I asked myself whether I understood what I read, I was compelled to answer as the Eunuch answered Philip, "How can I, except some one should teach me;" and I then called to mind the saying of St. Peter, that "no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation." From the moment I discovered this, my anxiety redoubled to ascertain the true nature of that Church, which I saw clearly God had endowed with outward ordinances, and an outward organization, and within which I could alone hope to find the true key for the comprehension of the sacred volume.

One circumstance is of great assistance to a member of the,

Society of Friends, in adopting the teaching or guidance of an outward Church, and it is this. It is not only admitted by them, but forms a prominent portion of their belief, that the promise of the Holy Spirit is not only a promise to each individual, but a perpetual promise to the Church at large. The language of Robert Barclay, before quoted, is conclusive on this point, if it needed confirmation. "Christians are always to be led inwardly and immediately by the Spirit of God dwelling in them; and the same is a standing and perpetual ordinance, as well to the Church in general in all ages, as to every individual member in particular." Nor is this mere matter of theory; it is a constant established order. A minister who believes that God has impressed on his mind a sense of the duty of performing a particular service, is yet obliged to submit his private sense to the public sense of the meeting to which he belongs. For they know well, that the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets, and that God hath appointed all things to order. Now, with regard to this perpetual guidance of the Church, it seemed very obvious that it had been assumed without sufficient proof, that the outpourings of the Spirit upon the Church were subject to the same conditions as when it was bestowed upon private individuals. To a private individual, the Holy Spirit is given primarily for his own individual salvation. It is partly a reward for past faithfulness; partly to supply his need for the future. But the guidance of the Holy Spirit to the Church, seemed to be based on very different grounds. It is an ordinance for the benefit, not primarily of the individuals on whom it is bestowed, nor as a reward for their individual faithfulness, nor to supply their own individual need for the future, nor even for the benefit of all Christians who may happen to be alive at any particular time, but for the benefit of all mankind, to the remotest posterity. And it seemed to me, that if the unfaithfulness of the believers of any particular time should deprive the Church of this supernatural guidance, it might be the means of drawing thousands, nay millions of men, into the most pernicious and destructive errors. And, as it must be admitted, that the promises of CHRIST are not completely fulfilled, unless each Christian has not only the guidance promised to each individual, but likewise his share in the guidance promised to the Church collectively; so the Church being deprived of its supernatural guidance, in consequence of the errors of individuals, would be the means of depriving millions of a great part of the blessings which he

has promised, and has promised to give them for ever. The words of CHRIST are conditional to each individual ; that is, the promise of help depends on the faithful discharge of duty by the individual. They are not conditional to the Church ; that is, there is no intimation that the Church which includes within it millions yet unborn, will be deprived of a blessing in consequence of the crimes or vices of the individuals who may constitute it at any particular time.

When we look into the New Testament, we find this distinction clearly recognized. The guidance given to the Apostles, in their character of Apostles, is very different from that given them as private individuals. Thus we find that St. Peter errs grievously, but his language speaking authoritatively to the Church we receive as inspired. Would the authority of St. Peter's Epistles be at all affected, if it were proved that he wrote them at the very time he was weakly yielding to the prejudices of the Jews, for which St. Paul withstood him to his face. In the general assembly of the Apostles at Jerusalem, when they discussed the obligation of the Mosaic law upon the Gentiles, while the matter is under discussion, they each give their opinions as fallible men, but the moment the Church has pronounced, these fallible and frail men declare their judgment in these terms, "It seemed good to the HOLY GHOST, and to us." The right, then, of the Church to pronounce with authority is not based by the Scriptures upon the individual faithfulness of its members, but upon their character as a Church, and is a trust given them for the benefit of future ages, not for their own individual benefit.

Besides, if there is to be such a thing as a certain infallible guidance, and if the Holy Spirit operates in two ways, first as a guide to the Church, and then as a guide to the individual, it seemed impossible to avoid coming to the conclusion that this certainty was nowhere to be met with, except in a conjunction of the two modes of teaching. The individual illumination was not given as a complete guide, except in subordination to the illumination conveyed through the Church. There is no warrant for any man to consider himself infallibly guided by the Spirit when he stands alone. The Gospel supposes men not to be isolated, but united in a Church ; and accordingly, as the Friends admit, there are two gifts,—one to the individual, and one to the Church. Now, when both these are united, the guidance is no doubt certain. But when, following the spirit of Protestantism a man stands by himself, and cuts himself off

from the Church, he deprives himself of that guidance of the Spirit which is manifested in the Church, and at the same time from all certainty.

These considerations led me to think, that if at any given period the members of the Church appeared to be plunged in corruption, I was not rashly to conclude that she had been therefore deprived of the supernatural protection which had been promised her. If we take the worst times, it is impossible for a person of charity to believe that there may not have been thousands or millions of devout souls, for whose sakes God may have spared the wicked, and still showered his blessings upon the Church as he had done in times of greater purity. The very point indeed had been long ago decided by the Infallible Judge with regard to religious teachers, as thoroughly corrupt as they could possibly be. "The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat; whatsoever therefore they bid you observe, that observe and do. But do not ye after their works, for they say and do not."

Believing then that the conscience of every devout believer, though supernaturally illuminated, was yet bound to submit to the authority of the Church, because the Church is also blessed with supernatural illumination and guidance; and seeing also that this guidance was a permanent and perpetual ordinance, and that the crimes of individuals, however high in station, afforded no ground for supposing that the guidance was therefore withdrawn from the body of which they were unworthy members; and having the above words of CHRIST fresh in my memory, I asked myself at what period could any man be possibly justified in setting up his own individual light, in opposition to the light that was always to burn in the Church? At what period could any man be possibly justified in breaking that unity which the Apostles so strenuously recommended, and the breach of which they denounced as so grievous a sin? I could find none: and I therefore came to the conclusion, that whoever had first of all separated from the main body of the Church, and had set up his own private judgment in opposition to that of the Church, must have been guilty of a grievous sin; and that the Church which remained behind, after that breach of unity, must have been just as certainly the Church, the heir of the promises of God, after the schism, as before it. It was therefore clear that there might be many bodies calling themselves Christians at the same time in the world, and yet only one of these entitled to the appellation of the Church of God, even though the

schismatical communities contained many pious well-meaning persons, who might, as individuals, justly hope for salvation through CHRIST. Thus, if GOD had promised a peculiar blessing to the Society of Friends, all the sects who separated from the Society, would then usurp the name to make it appear they were entitled to the blessing, but yet we know very well which is the Society of Friends, and which is not. The individuals who separated from the Friends a few months ago would not be members of the Society of Friends if they happened to think it for their interest, or even thought themselves entitled, to assume the appellation.

Holding, then, these opinions as to the relation and subordination of individual believers to the Church, and as to the relation of the Church herself to schismatical bodies that have been going out from her from the time of the Apostles downwards, it was next my duty to discover whether there was not in the present day, as in the primitive times, some body which could be called the Church, notwithstanding the variety of bodies now, as then, which have sprung up as separate communities.

In entering upon this enquiry, the first step naturally was, to observe the characteristics of the visible Church as described in the New Testament. For though the entire meaning and force of particular passages, and of the powers given in particular instances were not easy to be discovered on the principle of private judgment, yet certain leading features are obvious enough. The first, and most important is one I have already touched upon. It is the principle of authority. There are two ways in which a society may be organized, either from above or from beneath. The society may be generated either by a number of isolated individuals coming together and agreeing to delegate to certain persons a portion of power, or of duty, for the exercise of which they are to be responsible to the community which has chosen them, and which, by its voluntary choice, has stamped them with their character of rulers, or advisers; in which case the organization may be said to proceed from beneath upwards; or else, an individual may be the nucleus around which the society organizes itself, growing from above downwards; that is, he may associate with himself from time to time such persons as choose to unite with him, the fundamental principle of the society being—that the other members of it shall, either wholly, or within certain limits, be subject to his direction. Now, as the nature of these two sorts of societies differs in their origin or institution, so it differs in their mode of continuance

or propagation. As in the one, the society has its origin in the governed, and in the other, in the governor; so the former is continued and kept alive, through the instrumentality of the governed, the latter through the instrumentality of the governor. In the former, when the ruler or governor dies, his place is filled up by persons appointed by the subjects, or succeeding him according to a rule laid down beforehand by the subjects. In the latter, the place of a deceased ruler is supplied by the nomination of the ruler himself, or according to a rule laid down by the ruler. In the one instance, the life—the essence of the society—lies in the subjects; in the other, it lies in the ruler. In the one, the society is raised up from beneath, and is continued by a power proceeding from beneath; in the other, it depends or proceeds from above, and is continued by a power proceeding from above. It is after the former mode that the modern dissenting sects are constructed. It is on the latter principle that the societies of the early Christians were founded. The Apostles went about converting such as would listen to them, and formed them into societies, the principle of which was obedience to the Apostles. This authority was the origin or source of the new society. Within the limits of the society nothing was to be seen but absolute authority and unconditional submission, and the obedience was the more entire, as the Apostolic rulers had, with very little power of inflicting temporal punishments, the keys of the kingdom of heaven, the power of retaining and forgiving sins. Such was the character stamped on the Christian society, in its outset, and such was the character it retained under the first deputies of the Apostles, exercising a portion of delegated power in their lifetime. In short, there is no trace of any other mode of government whatever in the lifetime of the Apostles.

I have already quoted some of the passages which show the extraordinary powers given to Timothy and to Titus. Over the societies of which these eminent persons were made bishops, they were, in spiritual matters, absolute rulers. They were to *command*, to *hear accusations against elders*, to *expel heresies from the Christian community*. More absolute authority could not have been given. Such was the second stage in the history of the Christian community. The faithful were still united upon no other principles than those of authority on the one hand, and obedience on the other. And in what manner was the spiritual society to be kept alive? From beneath, or from above? The only principle known to the Scriptures is

clear and obvious. St. Paul's injunctions to Timothy and Titus are express, to continue their power by a new delegation, to ordain, to "lay hands" on teachers, who were to succeed them. The injunction of St. Paul to Timothy at the close of his life, is to "commit the things thou hast heard of me to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."* Titus, too, he enjoins to ordain elders in every city.† Here the sacred records fail us. So far as they go, their testimony is unanswerable. But though the sacred records end here, we are not to imagine that the Apostles, who insist so strongly on unity, who denounce so vehemently the guilt of schism, left their infant communities to themselves without taking common precautions against dissensions, or without leaving instructions as to the means of preserving unity. If there be any faith in the testimony of man, the Apostles left behind them a complete system of Church government, and *that* based on the very same principle of authority on the one hand, and submission on the other, which has been the basis of the Catholic society from the time of the Apostles down to the present day. And though in the fervour and purity of the primitive times, the rulers of the Church were (like wise and charitable men), always careful to ascertain the wishes of their spiritual subjects in the choice which they made, yet it was from the hands of the rulers, not from the voluntary election of the subjects, that the new officers derived their authority. And this was the case in the Apostolic times. Thus, when St. Paul and St. Barnabas went out on their mission from Antioch, they are said to have been sent by the Church by imposition of hands, though it is absurd to suppose that St. Paul, whose calling was miraculous, and who exhorts Timothy to "command" the flock committed to him, could receive any addition to his authority, from the imposition of hands of his own converts. In the same way the Presbytery, or priesthood, laid their hands upon Timothy, but yet we know that the Grace of God was in him, by the imposition of hands of St. Paul himself, who vested in him the most sovereign powers. The imposition of hands in this case, as well as in the former, was a mere friendly adjunct, and is so stated. St. Clement was the successor of St. Peter, as Bishop of Rome. He was a friend of St. Paul, who has left this testimony of him, that his name is written in the book of life. Hear, then, the language of St. Clement, in his Epistle to the Corinthians,

* 2 Tim. ii. 2.

† Titus, i. 5.

written between thirty and forty years after the crucifixion, on occasion of a sedition by which their church was disturbed.

“Seeing, then, these things are manifest unto us, it will behove us to take care that, looking into the depths of the Divine knowledge, we do all things in order, whatsoever our LORD has commanded us to do; and particularly, that we perform our offerings and service to GOD at their appointed seasons; for these he has commanded to be done, not rashly or disorderly, but at certain determinate times and hours: and therefore he has ordained, by his supreme will and authority, both where, and by what persons they are to be performed? that so all things being piously done unto all well-pleasing, they may be acceptable unto him. They, therefore, who make their offerings at the appointed seasons, are happy and accepted; because that, obeying the commandments of the LORD, they are free from sin.*

“The Apostles have preached to us from our LORD JESUS CHRIST; JESUS CHRIST from GOD. CHRIST, therefore, was sent by GOD, the Apostles by CHRIST: so both were orderly sent, according to the will of GOD. For, having received their command, and being thoroughly assured by the resurrection of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, and convinced by the word of GOD, with the fulness of the Holy Spirit, they went abroad publishing *that the kingdom of God was at hand*. And thus preaching through countries and cities, they appointed the first fruits of their conversions, to be bishops and ministers over such as should afterwards believe, having first proved them by the Spirit.†

“And what wonder if they, to whom such a work was committed by GOD in CHRIST, established such officers as we before mentioned; when even that blessed and faithful servant in all his house, Moses, set down in the Holy Scriptures all things that were commanded him.” [He then relates the incident of Aaron’s rod, whereby the order of the Jewish priesthood was settled.] “What think you beloved? Did not Moses before know what should happen? Yes, verily; but to the end there might be no division nor tumult in Israel, he did in this manner, that the name of the true and only GOD might be glorified; to him be honour for ever and ever, Amen.‡

“So likewise our Apostles knew by our LORD JESUS CHRIST, that there should contentions arise upon the account of the

* Clemens Epis. ad Cor., cap. 40.

† Chap. 42.

‡ Chap. 43.

ministry. And therefore having a perfect fore-knowledge of this, they appointed persons as we have before said, and then gave direction how, when they should die, other chosen and approved men should succeed in their ministry." [Or "left a list of other chosen and approved persons, who should succeed them in their ministry."]*

The language of St. Ignatius, in those memorable Epistles written to various Churches as he went to Rome, by order of the Emperor Trajan, to be devoured by wild beasts, is not less emphatic. It is, be remembered, that St. Ignatius was made Bishop of Antioch by St. Peter. From many similar passages, I select the following. "I exhort you that ye would all run together, according to the will of God. For even JESUS CHRIST, our inseparable life, is sent by the will of the Father; as the bishops, appointed unto the utmost bounds of the earth, are by the will of CHRIST."† "How happy must I think you who are so joined to your bishop, as the Church is to JESUS CHRIST, and JESUS CHRIST to the Father; so that all things may agree in the same unity! Let no man deceive himself; if a man be not within the altar, he is deprived of the bread of God."‡

"The more any one sees his bishop silent, the more let him revere him. For whomsoever the master of the house sends to be over his own household, we ought in like manner to receive him, as we would do him that sent him. It is therefore evident, that we ought to look upon the bishop even as we would do upon the Lord himself."§

"Seeing then, that I have been judged worthy to see you, by Damas, your most excellent bishop, and by your very worthy Presbyters, Bassus and Apollonius; and by my fellow-servant Sotio, the deacon, in whom I rejoice, forasmuch as he is subject unto his bishop as to the Grace of God, and to the Presbytery, as to the law of JESUS CHRIST; I determined to write unto you."||

"Wherefore it will become you also not to use your bishop too familiarly, upon the account of his youth, but to yield all reverence to him, according to the power of God the Father—as also I perceive that your holy presbyters do—not considering his age, which indeed, to appearance, is young, but as becomes those who are prudent in God, submitting to him, or

* Chap. 44. † Epist. ad Ephes. c. 3 and 4. ‡ Ibid. c. 5. § Ibid. c. 6.
|| Epist. ad Magn. c. 2, &c.

rather not to him, but to the Father of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, the Bishop of us all. It will, therefore, behave you, with all sincerity, to obey your bishop, in honour of Him whose pleasure it is that ye should do so; because, he that does not do so, deceives not the bishop whom he sees, but affronts Him that is invisible; for whatsoever of this kind is done, it reflects not upon man, but upon God, who knows the secrets of our hearts. It is, therefore, that we should not only be called Christians, but be so. As some call, indeed, their governor bishop; but yet do all things without him; but I can never think that such as these have a good conscience, seeing they are not gathered together thoroughly, according to God's commandment."

"Continue inseparable from JESUS CHRIST our God, and from your bishop, and from the commands of the Apostles. He that is within the altar is pure; but he that is without, that does anything without the bishop and presbyters and deacons, is not pure in his conscience."*

He salutes the Philadelphians, "especially if they are at unity with the bishop and presbyters who are with him, and the deacons appointed according to the will of JESUS CHRIST, whom he has settled according to his own will, in all firmness, by his Holy Spirit."†

"I cried while I was among you, I spake with a loud voice; attend to the bishop, to the presbytery, and the deacons. Now, some supposed that I spake this as foreseeing the division that should come among you. But He is my witness, for whose sake I am in bonds, that I know nothing from any man; but the Spirit spake, saying on this wise; do nothing without the bishop; keep your bodies as the temples of God; love unity; flee divisions; be the followers of CHRIST, as he was of his Father. I therefore did as became me, as a man composed to unity; for where there is division and wrath, God dwelleth not. But the LORD forgives all that repent, if they return to the unity of God, and to the council of the bishop."‡ "Hearken unto the bishop, that God also may hearken unto you. My soul be security for them that submit to their bishop, with their presbyters and deacons."§

To continue these quotations would be useless. It may be said without exaggeration, that the one doctrine which St.

* Ephes. ad Trall. c. 7. † Epist. ad Philadelph. ‡ Epist. ad Philadelph. c. 7. § Epist. ad St. Polyc. cap. vi.

Ignatius felt he had to preach to all the Churches as he went to martyrdom, was the divine institution of the Church government which the Apostles had left behind, and the absolute necessity of obedience to that as to God himself; notwithstanding, many of the Churches had passed under the rule of bishops wholly unknown to the Apostles. For further confirmation, where none is needed, I add this sentence from St. Polycarp to the Philippians written at the same time. "Wherefore ye must needs abstain from these things, being subject to the priests (presbyters) and deacons, as unto God and CHRIST."*

This, then, was the condition in which the Apostles left the Churches, when they died. Authority, obedience; there was no other government. The persons whom the Apostles appointed as bishops, believed they were conferring the greatest benefit on the Christian society, by enforcing with all the ardour they were capable of, the divine origin of that government of authority, and obedience, with which the Apostles endowed the Church, and of which they have left us the outline in their writings, in the New Testament. This is the grand feature in the government of the primitive Church under CHRIST, under the Apostles, under the immediate successors of the Apostles, and under those who succeeded these first successors; and this grand principle has been preserved in the Catholic Church, without the slightest change from those times down to the present day, and is, moreover, one of the principles for the maintenance of which uninjured, the Church is honoured with the bitterest slanders of the malignant among her enemies.

The next feature of the organization of the primitive Church, to which I shall advert, is unity. We all know what our SAVIOUR says about his disciples, being one fold, under one shepherd. We all know the ceaseless exhortations of the Apostles to unity, to "flee divisions which are the root of all evils." In the fervour and purity of the primitive times, there was little room for disputes between different Churches. The dissensions were mostly caused by a few seditious persons in some one Church, and the authority of the bishop was sufficient to repress them. Occasionally, indeed, there arose a dissension of more importance, such as that which, we have seen, compelled the Corinthians to have recourse to the pater-

nal interference of St. Clement, the Bishop of Rome. There was, too, at the first, while the teaching of the Apostles remained fresh in the remembrance of the various Churches they had founded, a general agreement in doctrine, which left no room for serious schisms. But as soon as divisions began to appear between the Churches, we can trace most distinctly and in the very earliest ages, that the Apostles had made a difference in power and dignity among the bishops; that a pre-eminence over the neighbouring bishops had been given to the bishopricks of Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem, and above all Rome, which was acknowledged to be the centre of the unity of Christendom. It is well known that the Catholics ground the authority of the Popes upon, among other reasons, those passages in the Scripture where CHRIST gives peculiar authority to St. Peter; such as the prophecy, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Now, it is a very important fact, that this interpretation was recognized by other bishops of the greatest eminence, before the matter had been made the subject of controversy.*

But I shall the less insist upon these passages of Scripture and proofs from antiquity, because, though I hold them to be unanswerable, I know that every passage of Scripture receives a different interpretation, according to the position from which it is viewed; and so long as we are in dispute about the true point of view, we shall never agree as to the meaning of any particular passage. I prefer recurring to a consideration I have already stated briefly, and on which we are able to meet on common grounds. It is a most indubitable principle of Friends,† that the teaching of the Holy Spirit which is to guide us into all truth, is a perpetual ordinance of a two-fold character. There is the teaching of the Holy Spirit in the Church,

* St. Cyprian on the Unity of the Church. The following passage is from St. Irenæus Adv. Hæres, lib. 3. St. Irenæus, I have already said, was the disciple of St. Polycarp, the disciple of St. John the Evangelist. "We ought to have recourse to the greatest Church, the most ancient and known to all, founded at Rome by the two most glorious apostles, Peter and Paul, which retains the tradition which it receives from them, and which is derived through a succession of bishops down to us; shewing which, we confound all who any way out of self-conceit, love of applause, blindness, or false persuasions, embrace what ought not to be advanced; for to this Church, on account of its chieffer presidentship, it is necessary that every Church, that is the faithful every where, address themselves, in which Church the tradition from the Apostles is every where preserved."

† Robert Barclay's Apology, see ante, p. 55.

and the teaching of the Holy Spirit in the heart of each individual Christian. Now, if this be so (and it is a point agreed on between us), no man has any reason to believe himself infallibly led, or sure of any certain guidance from above, except so far as he surrenders his mind to the influence of the HOLY GHOST, teaching in these two ways; teaching in his own heart, and teaching in the Church at large. The guidance of the Holy Spirit for each individual is not contained entire in either of these two teachings separate, but in them both combined. The Christian is not an isolated individual, but a member of the Church. He has no warrant to stand alone. He has no warrant to expect any certain guidance when he stands alone; but within the Church, when he is instructed by the HOLY GHOST, teaching in the two modes in which CHRIST has promised that it shall teach, then alone is he entitled to consider himself sure of a heavenly and unfailing guidance. It is certain, then, that if a man is to be infallibly led (which is the fundamental principle of the Society of Friends) the Church, through which he is to receive that portion of the teaching of the HOLY GHOST which comes through the Church, must be *one*—must be united in one unchanging faith. If the Society of Friends is the true Church to which the individual Christian is to recur, for the teaching of the HOLY GHOST, it is certain that we have no warrant for expecting the teaching of the HOLY GHOST in any other community. I know the modern lax doctrine, that the HOLY GHOST teaches through a variety of Churches, or at least, that all individuals, of whatever faith, that are devout followers of the light within them, are members of the true Church; and so, I doubt not, they are. But still, if we are to look for the guidance and teaching of the HOLY GHOST through the Church at all, it cannot be through a miscellaneous collection of individuals, holding all kinds of opinion, from Trinitarianism down to Paganism. A Unitarian, nay, an untutored savage, if true to the means afforded him, may be, I should hope, a member of the Church of CHRIST, in this sense. But there is no possible mode in which I can be instructed through the instrumentality of a Church composed of members, of whom, perhaps, there are many that have no one single article or principle of belief in common. Neither is there any possible way in which I can receive the infallible guidance of the HOLY GHOST, through a Church composed of a vast variety of sects professing Christianity, but holding the most discordant and opposite opinions. If the Holy Spirit guides

us through the Anglican Church, it guides us into Anglicanism. If the Holy Spirit guides us into the Scotch Church, it guides us into Calvinism ; if through the German Churches, into Lutheranism or Unitarianism ; and thus, if the Holy Spirit teaches in all these, and I am to surrender myself to the teaching of that one which agrees best with my own individual light, I am in fact, guided wholly by my own individual light, and I make that the judge over the light that burns in the Church. All certainty is at an end. The HOLY GHOST has surrendered his office of guiding into all truth, inasmuch as he guides some into one belief, and some into another ; and the promises of CHRIST, which Robert Barclay insists on, of teaching *all* things, of guiding into *all* truth, and *for ever*, are not fulfilled.

On the other hand, if the teaching of the HOLY GHOST through the Church be any thing more than a delusion, and be an essential and necessary part of the infallible guidance promised to mankind, it must be a Church which preserves one unchanging and uniform faith through all its various parts. It must be a Church which has in itself a principle of unity, in faith and doctrine. It cannot be a Church, the faith and doctrine of which vary in different times, in different latitudes, among different nations of the earth. The promise, then, by our SAVIOUR, of the HOLY GHOST to lead into all truth, and to be a perpetual guidance to the Church ; the constant and unremitting exhortations of the Apostles, and Apostolic men to unity ; the fearful denunciations against schism as a *sin* ; all these things established beyond a doubt, that the Church had within itself a principle of unity, the due submission to which might preserve the believer from the commission of this sin, might enable him to keep within the pale of this unity, might lead him certainly into all truth, by his humble co-operation with the Spirit teaching within him, along with the Spirit informing the Church at large.

These two grand features then,—first, of a Church organization founded on a principle of authority proceeding from above, depending from the ruler, and perpetuating itself by a perpetual transmission or delegation from ruler to ruler ;—and secondly, of a Church organization involving in itself a principle of unity, a principle whereby the believer may have a certain faith that he receives through it that portion of the teaching of the HOLY GHOST which has been promised him in the Church ; these two grand features which are as visible in Scripture as any other article of faith, must be, it seemed to me, to be found

in some one Church, and in that Church only, which is entitled to consider itself the heir of the promises of CHRIST.

Now, in casting my eyes over the entire history of Christianity, I saw one striking fact which was too obvious to be misunderstood. Anterior to the schism between the Eastern and Western Churches, the great bulk of Christians were united under the supremacy of the Bishop of Rome, in a society, the organization of which had been perpetuated by a regular transmission of authority such as I have described, and which contained within itself unity of faith, and practice. I found, too, that every collection of individuals who, either before or since, had disunited themselves from communion with Rome, had, most of them, lost this primitive and perpetual organization, and had, all of them, cut themselves off from the principle of unity. Henceforth, if the principle upon which any of these schismatics separated from communion with Rome, was to prevail, unity of faith was impossible; all certain teaching of the HOLY GHOST through the Church was at an end; one of the necessary elements of the promised guidance into all truth was destroyed for ever. Look at all and each of the Churches which have separated from Rome. Every one of them contains within itself the principle of discord, of disunion, of diversity of faith. Follow the teaching of any one of them, and the doctrine of CHRIST is no longer one, but many, varying with colour, climate, longitude, temper, disposition, and parentage. Look again at the Churches in communion with Rome; you behold unity, concord, agreement. You behold also a principle, which, against all human probabilities, in spite of all human risks and dangers, has maintained unity, and agreement of faith, and along with that, vital soundness and energy for the propagation of the faith. Everywhere else I beheld discord; here, and here only, I beheld concord. Moreover in the doctrines taught by the Church of Rome, I saw nothing whatever that was in any way at variance with Scripture. I saw, indeed, much, of which only the germ and basis were contained in Scripture, and of which, by my own unassisted reason, I should never have discovered the fulness in Scripture, but I saw nothing whatever at variance with Scripture. I saw, too, that by accepting the teaching of the Catholic Church, a flood of light was thrown upon numberless passages which I had before passed over as unimportant or as unintelligible. The Bible itself seemed to be lit up with a new and a heavenly splendour.

When from the Church of Rome I turned aside to the other Churches of Christians, and asked myself upon what grounds can I join myself to this or that community, I found the whole enquiry a chaos. Before I could join any one of them, I found that I must become a perfect theologian. The various kinds and properties of grace, predestination, and free-will, election and reprobation, the nature and number of the sacraments, the final perseverance of the Saints, the perfection of the Saints, the qualifications, duties, and powers of a Christian minister,—on all these, and a thousand other knotty questions, must I make up my mind before I could join any of the Protestant sects. When I looked to the Anglican Church, I had to be satisfied as to the meaning and orthodoxy of the 39 articles. Now, the meaning of these articles I could by no means ascertain, seeing that many of them have been studiously contrived, not to express truth accurately, but to include under one general and cloudy form of words as many contrary opinions as possible; and their orthodoxy, I felt myself utterly incompetent to pronounce upon. It was the same, more or less, in every other sect. I was told to examine, to judge for myself, to exercise my own private judgment, to stand upon my own independence. Of all bodies of Christians (except Friends) the Catholic Church alone told me honestly my own ignorance, my own insufficiency, my own inability to scan and criticize the truths of revelation; alone counselled me to become as a little child; not to set up for a doctor in matters that were too high for me, but to cast aside my own proud independence, and come as a scholar to the school of CHRIST. In the Society of Friends, indeed, I know well, I was taught the same lesson. I was taught to humble my own human reason before the teaching of the HOLY GHOST. But I was there taught also what my own experience contradicted, that this inward teaching without the guidance of the Church, would lead me infallibly into all truth: or at least, while telling me of the standing ordinance of the HOLY GHOST teaching in the Church, it made it impossible for me to discover which was the true Church, through which I was to receive this teaching of the HOLY GHOST. Here, then, I saw abundant reason for a presumption in favour of the Catholic Church, as supplying every guidance that I stood in need of; the Holy Spirit teaching within me, the Holy Spirit teaching in the Church, the sure and certain guidance, which CHRIST has promised, into all truth.

There was, as it seemed to me, but one ground upon which this weight of evidence in favour of the Catholic Church could be at all resisted ; and that was the corruptions which are so frequently charged upon her. What, I said to myself, and others said to me, will you consent to believe what a Church so deeply involved in corrupt practices teaches you ? Will you submit yourself to the direction of priests so corrupt and worldly-minded, as every *Protestant* knows the Catholic priesthood to be. Here I confess, having all my old prejudices about me, I was staggered for a while. But a little consideration sufficed to convince me, that this feeling, this Protestant repugnance, has its origin in pride of the most vulgar description.

Our blessed SAVIOUR has promised that the HOLY GHOST will teach in the Church to all eternity, but I will not believe what the Church teaches, because some of the rulers of the Church are men of corrupt lives, I will take upon myself to determine at what time the HOLY GHOST ceased to teach in the Church ; our blessed SAVIOUR and his Apostles have commanded us to obey authorities, to preserve unity in the Church, but I will not obey authorities, I will not preserve unity, because the men who claim obedience are not men whom I can personally respect ; these are propositions that sound strange in the ears of any one who has learned the merest rudiments of Christianity. The old law of heathenism was a law of force. Obey while you are weak, and your ruler is strong ; obey while it profits you ; obey while it is dangerous to rebel. Or, if it took higher ground, it was a law of personal merit ; obey while the ruler is deserving of obedience ; obey while he is a man to whom you can look up with respect, with reverence ; obey him who is your superior in merit. Or when guided by a higher instinct which it knew not, it recognized the necessity of some Divine or supernatural motive to ensure obedience, it flew out into impious folly, deifying the ruler, making him a God, or the Son of a God, or at least, one who was sacred as a God during life, and was to be deified after death. Now, here was slavery in every part. It was either slavery to man, personal subjection to the pre-eminence of force, or the pre-eminence of individual merit ; or else it was slavery to man with the grievous addition of being slavery to a lie ; the falsehood that a man often the lowest and most corrupt of his species was a God, a portion of the nature of the Divinity. Now, from these various forms of slavery, as well as from all others, did Christianity come to set us free. The new law was

couched in these terms : * “ Be subject not only for wrath but for conscience sake.” Even of the rapacious Roman governor, and the brutal Roman Emperor it was said, “ he is the minister of God to thee for good.” “ There is no power but of God.” “ They that resist shall receive unto themselves damnation.” And the reason for this subjection to the brutal and rapacious was given also : “ Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man, *for the Lord’s sake* :” † “ for what glory is it if when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. *For even hereunto ye were called* ; because CHRIST also suffered for us, leaving us an example, &c. ‡ Even to the miserable Roman slave it was said, in the sublime language of the Apostle ; § “ Art thou called being a servant? care not for it ; but if thou mayst be made free, use it rather. For he that is called in the LORD, being a servant, is the LORD’s freeman ; likewise also, he that is called, being free, is CHRIST’s servant. Ye are bought with a price ; *be not ye servants of men.*”

And if this was the rule with regard to earthly and corrupt authority, nay, if this obedience to evil doers was the very thing, as St. Peter tells us, “ whereunto we were called,” much more was obedience due to the ruler in CHRIST’s Church, where obedience was so absolutely necessary to preserve that unity, a breach of which was so grievous a sin. Accordingly we have seen already that the Epistles of St. Ignatius are little more than one continued hymn of obedience. Do not despise your bishop on account of his youth, “ || but as becomes those who are prudent in God submit to him, *or rather not to him, but to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Bishop of us all.* For he who disobeys, deceives not the Bishop whom he sees, but affronts Him that is invisible.” This was the Christian rule with regard to all obedience, lay and spiritual, for centuries, in the Church. Christians were to obey all authority, but were not to be the servants of men. They were to revere every one in authority, not for wrath ; not from fear ; not from considerations of merit, which would make all obedience a matter of personal rivalry, and a painful admission of inferiority ; not from an impious pretence that the corrupt ruler was a God ; but for conscience sake, and as the minister of God, who has

* Romans, c. xiii. 5.

§ 1 Cor. vii. 21.

† 1 Peter, li. '3.

|| Epist. ad Magn., c. 3.

‡ Ibid, v. 20.

thought fit, for reasons which we are unable to scrutinize, to delegate his authority to corrupt and wicked men, to make them ministers of his righteous decrees, to inflict his judgments on the wicked, and prove his righteous servants with tribulations through the instrumentality of cruel tyrants, corrupt judges, merciless administrators of unjust and oppressive laws. This was the Christian law. This was the true law of liberty. Meek obedience to all evil, for conscience sake. An inward freedom, the more boundless, as it had a perfect existence and complete nourishment in the midst of the basest and lowest servitude. The Christian was obedient to all in meekness, but he was the servant of God alone. He revered all in authority, not because they were powerful, or great with outward or even inward greatness, or because they were Gods, but, because, being, as he—better than all others—knew them to be, of a fallen nature, and sold under sin, they yet had upon them, as the viceroys of the INFINITE RULER, some stamp of the majesty of God. And, with regard to the rulers of the Church, though some of them might be polluted stewards of the mysteries of Heaven, yet so long as they were rulers, he submitted himself to them for God's sake. When most virtuous he obeyed them, not as men, nor for man. When most wicked he disobeyed them not, as if his former obedience had been due to them in their character of men. In neither case, whether they were virtuous or wicked, was he a servant of men. And this rule prevailed for centuries, and in the wildest times supplied the place of all outward law. But when the poison of scepticism began to circulate in the veins and arteries of Christendom, when the law of faith and divine reverence began to be weak, when the fervour of old times began to wax cold, then first was heard in the mouths of Christians that maxim of heathenism—that principle of slavery, under the name of freedom—that manifestation of Satan transformed into an angel of light, “We will obey none but the virtuous. Be they Kings or Popes, Bishops or Emperors, Priests or Lords, when *they* become corrupt, *we* will become disobedient.”

Miserable sophistry! As if obedience and reverence were due from man to man! from one miserable sinner to the virtue of another, whose own merits could not rescue him from the pit of destruction, from the gulf of eternal condemnation! Then began men to take in their own minds the measure of the merits of their rulers, and the more malignant each man's heart was, the less merit did he find in him who enjoined him

an unpalatable command. Then the bonds of society began to be relaxed,—the reverence of rank to rank, which had kept each man free within his own order, and enabled him to submit to those of a higher rank without servility. Then men began to envy those above them, not being content “to abide in the same calling wherein they were called ;”^{*} and each man loathing the inward freedom of the Gospel, which consists in obedience and reverence, began to feel that he was a slave, unless everything above him was violently brought down to his own miserable level. And thus the evil went on from bad to worse, through the various stages of Reformations and servile wars, rebellions, and revolutions, until it ended in the grand crash of the eighteenth century, the worship of atheism, the rule of the guillotine, convulsion, anarchy, chaos.

These were the fruits of that zealous preaching of the first grand heresy, which lost us paradise—the heresy of disobedience, which hath proudly called itself the Reformation. Never was there a deeper delusion, than the notion that the Reformation was brought about by the horror of pious men, at the corruptions of the Church. What! could not these pious men, each be pious to himself, taking care to give no occasion of sin in his own example, and where public abuse needed public protestation, protesting, and if need were suffering for his piety, without making a breach in the unity of the Church? As for matter of faith, the wisest and most learned Protestants in Germany changed their faith every year, and to the last, agreed in nothing but detestation of the Church of God. Or were these pious men unable to endure among them the contamination of the vicious, and unable to worship God in the same Church with the impure? As if the eleven disciples had refused to follow CHRIST, because Judas was a thief and a traitor; or because, if they followed him at all, they had to follow him in the company of publicans and harlots! One might have thought, that a Church which was good enough for Sir Thomas More, and his daughter Margaret Roper, and Fisher the Bishop of Rochester, and which they found good enough to live in, and which two of them thought worth dying for; surely such a Church might have contented the immaculate Cranmer, the pious Cromwell, and the devout Protector Somerset.

But it was not so to be. The old law of liberty was at an

^{*} 1 Corinth., c. vii. v. 20.

end. Men had drunk to the dregs the cup of servility, which they called independence. Henceforth men were to obey nothing but virtue, in which this world was known from of old to be so rich, even to profuseness. And henceforth, if God had not placed each devout schismatic under governors and rulers, pious and good enough for him, he was to be at liberty, regardless of the Apostolic injunctions, to add schism to schism, and to set up rulers of his own choosing—rulers who might be more in proportion to his own transcendent merits. This was the new law of the Reformation. There was to be no waiting; no patience to see the issues of the Divine decree; no meek prayer to God to heal corruptions without breach of unity; no fear lest breach of unity might unsettle all faith, and by making the rule of faith doubtful, convert men into sceptics and atheists. No; every man felt himself called upon and qualified to reform a world; and according to his ability, stepped proudly forward with his little nostrum,—with his own little modicum of infallibility, denouncing his fellow-quacks as instruments of Satan, and pronouncing himself the true Apostle of God. Hence it was, that whole nations became for the first time in the history of Europe, some Atheists, some Unitarians. Others struggling against the dreadful disorder, not wisely, but too well, lost the old liberties of Europe, and sunk down into slavery and inertness. A few only, (and those Catholics—Belgium for example), could still show, as in the olden time, a population down to the lowest commonalty, devout, faithful, and free. Hence, too, many a noble spirit, even in the present day, may be seen wandering in uncertainty and miserable errors, ignorant where true guidance is to be had, sceptic not merely in matters of faith, but it may be in some of the commonest precepts of the moral law, anxiously seeking for truth, and finding only opinion, his whole spiritual nature undermined and wasted to its core, because the proud spirit of Luther could not brook the restraint of the Gospel of obedience, nor the brutal appetite of Henry, the obligations of Gospel morality.

Now, with all this mass of evil, the Society of Friends are not in the smallest degree concerned. Theirs was not a protest against Catholicism, but against Protestantism. It was not a breach of the unity of the Church, but an attempt to call back Protestantism to unity. It was a grand protest against the right of private judgment, the Protestant deification of human opinions. But still the facts are as I have stated. Corruptions were the pretence; but a vulgar, pagan spirit of pride

was the cause. Corruptions can never be the just ground of refusing obedience to authority, of hazarding the fearful guilt of schism. On the contrary, where corruption in the ruler is the greatest, there should be the truest and freest obedience among those subjects who are upright. And as corruption in authority can afford no justification for disobedience, so neither can it be a just ground of refusing assent to the teaching of the Church. I have already shown that there is no warrant for holding that the guidance of the HOLY GHOST in and through the Church, was to be dependent on the piety of its members at any particular period; as it was ordained, not as a reward to the individuals, but as a relief to the need of man, down to the remotest ages of the world. The prophecy of Balam was not the less divine because he was unjust and sinful. The Epistles of St. Peter are not the less inspired, because he was liable to sink into human frailties. As it was in those days, so it is now. We are not left under the guidance of mere natural laws. Though men have been corrupt, yet the office of the Holy Spirit teaching in the Church has been fulfilled, according to the promise of CHRIST. GOD hath not doomed all mankind to doubt and division, on account of the errors of a few; and, looking around me, I saw well in the fortunes of the Catholic Church reviving on every side, that GOD had not deserted her for a moment, but was even now preparing to extinguish the discords of Christendom by setting forward her triumphant restoration.

Now, when I saw through these greater objections to the truth of Catholicism, I found little difficulty with the smaller ones. To mention only one of these, (for I must refer to the works before cited for anything like a full discussion),* I saw little, in the often repeated charge of idolatry, in respect of their use of images.

If it be true, that every outward help in matters of religion is to be discarded, as tending to sensualize the mind,† then, and then only, is the modern outcry against the Catholic images and paintings, rational and consistent. Here, as on every other point, there seems no resting place for a devout

* Ante, p. 8, note.

† How different is this notion from the feeling of the most spiritual of our modern poets. See that beautiful poem of Wordsworth's, "Devotional Incitements:"

"Alas! the sanctities combined
By art, to *unsensualize* the mind, &c."

mind between Quakerism and Catholicism. If all outward assistances are unspiritualizing, images must vanish along with forms of prayer, and ceremonies of every description. But neither is Quakerism *entirely* consistent with itself on this point, though it is much nearer to consistency than the various sects of Protestants. But it is the glorious privilege of truth alone to be consistent throughout. For if all outward helps are to vanish, if the mind is to rest wholly on the inward teaching of the Spirit, and neglect every external assistance that may tend to prepare and discipline it to receive and profit by that teaching, to what purpose are those meetings oftener than the week, where the devout meet together humbly to wait upon God? Can they not wait upon God at their own houses? Doth not the Spirit condescend to enter beneath the lowly roof of the private worshipper? Oh, yes! But it is that CHRIST himself has sanctioned, nay, enjoined the use of an outward assistance of the most potent kind, when he tells us, that where two or three are gathered together in his name, there is he in the midst of them. To be strictly consistent, the Friends should interpret this passage, as they do so many others, and tell us, that this gathering together is not outward, but spiritual and inward. But, indeed, the inconsistency lies deeper than this. Does any one educate his children on this principle? Does any one insanely neglect all outward means of turning the infant mind to virtue? By no means. The child is shut out from all resort of evil company; is surrounded by every outward example of goodness and piety; is tutored by books of religion which are adorned with pictures, to render more vivid and impressive the verbal lessons of the text; is taught to learn by heart holy and spiritual hymns; and by every outward means that human ingenuity can devise, is conducted to the true inward worship, is weaned from the worship of outward things. In the education of children, every one recognizes the true principle that the things of sense are to be wisely used, to render the mind unsensual.

And as people grow out of childhood, the same principle is everywhere manifested; for the Divine instinct is more unerring than the systems and theories of man. Do not men of all creeds surround themselves on every side with fair and noble objects? Does not the citizen leave his daily toil, and the busy hum of the streets, to solace himself every evening and every morning, though it were with but a glimpse of the

handiwork of the Almighty? Does he not fly as from a pestilence from the works of man, to solace himself with the works of God? What line of poetry more frequent in the mouth of a Friend than that line of Cowper—

“ God made the country, and man made the town.” ?

Does he not, in his mansion, or villa, or cottage in the country, surround himself with flowers and trees, and evergreen shrubs, that speak of an eternal summer, and lawns and waterfalls; and whatever else of the same kind his means enable him to collect around him? Nay, even if his worldly occupations do not allow him to leave the town, does he not keep at his smoky and dingy window some pot of sweet smelling mignonette, some geranium, or some root of hyacinth over his mantel-piece? And when the summer is drawing to a close, and the trees are beginning to clothe themselves in their autumnal tints, does he not choose out some sequestered spot in which, before the arrival of desolate winter, he may refresh himself, in intercourse with the restoring powers of nature? And why does he so? Is it for pleasure, for amusement, to enjoy himself, to scrape together as much of the transitory delights of this life as lie within his reach? Is he a sensual epicurean, and does he look upon it that pleasure is the ultimate good, and that God has sent CHRIST to suffer death for his redemption, and taught him the religion of the cross, and then, forsooth, has laid deep the foundations of this magnificent earth, only to minister to his pleasure? Oh, no! the Friend who uses nature as we have described, is no such pagan. He knows well that the true use of every pleasure is to lead us to God. That the beauty and the glory of the outward creation are lawfully to be used and enjoyed by us, because they are symbols of the power, the wisdom, and the goodness of Him who has created both them and us. He knows that the smallest leaf, or root, or flower, or mineral, speaks volumes of the God who has created them. And for this purpose it is that he surrounds himself at all events with some of God's workmanship, to cheer and console him amid the trivialities of human existence. To what purpose does he attend lectures on astronomy, and delight himself in orreries, and read treatises on natural theology, and study the exquisite anatomy of the hand; but because he knows well that this outward world has been contrived so cunningly, and

dressed up in such heavenly beauty, not to minister to his pleasure, but to preach to him of the God who made him ?

Truly, if we would be consistent, let us burn our meeting houses, and the pious stories for our children, and the pictures in their books, our Bridgwater treatises, and Paley's Natural Theology ; nay, let us devastate the face of the earth itself and make creation a blank, if we will allow no outward object to suggest an inward aspiration, and dispose our minds for the teaching of the HOLY GHOST ! Let us do this, for assuredly these things were not created for pleasure ; they were made in vain and in waste, if they were not placed there as symbols of religion, as outward instruments of worship. Is it not a work of humility to receive with thankfulness whatever outward helps God has given us, or enabled us to use, and to acknowledge with a sigh, that all helps are little enough to free the sinful and imperfect soul from the taint of sin, and cleanse it from that impurity which must be washed away before it can enter the kingdom of heaven ?

If this be the true use of the outward creation, if we ought to discipline our minds so that every thing about us shall serve as a symbol of the Divinity, and an instrument of worship, are we to forget that we have not been born the creatures of mere natural worship ? We all fell in Adam, and there fell with Adam and the powers of the human soul, the whole outward and visible creation. The shock pervaded the entire universe.

"Throng's of celestial visages,
Darkening like water in the breeze,
A holy sadness shared."

WORDSWORTH.

"Earth trembled from her entrails, as again
In pangs ; and Nature gave a second groan ;
Sky lour'd, and muttering thunder, some sad drops
Wept at completing of the mortal sin
Original."

MILTON.

The whole creation suffered in the fall ; "and groaneth, and travaileth in pain together," until it be "delivered from the bondage of corruption." Not alone was man redeemed by the sacrifice of the cross. The outward world which shared in his fall shared also in his redemption, and now looketh earnestly for a renovation, and new birth. This world then, upon which condemnation has fallen, and which bears upon itself by nature no sign of its redemption, is not a perfect symbol of the re-

lation of man to God. It tells us of his power, his wisdom, and his goodness as they might be known to the enlightened and devout heathen. It speaks to us no word of our redemption, and regeneration by grace. Is it then lawful for us to use the outward world and all the forms of it, as symbols of natural religion, and instruments of natural worship, and not to stamp on every thing around us symbols of revealed religion, instruments of worship through grace? If the bursting forth of spring may be permitted to speak to our hearts as a type of the natural bounty of our Creator, and may be used without blame to inspire us with feelings of thanksgiving for his outward blessings, may not the crucifix be used without blame also, as a type of the *revealed* bounty of the Creator, and to inspire us with feelings of thanksgiving for his inward blessings in our redemption and sanctification?

But we are told that the Catholics go far beyond this. This is not the ground of complaint. All this would be innocent and harmless, nay, laudable enough, but the Catholics *worship* images, they pay *adoration* to the works of their own hands; they pray to wood, and stone, and ivory, and transfer to the creature the homage due to the Creator; they are idolators; they actually strike out of the decalogue the second commandment. That this is a most wicked calumny, however often it may be repeated, is notorious to every one who has read the small catechism, the first book of religious instruction put into the hands of every Catholic child. However, that a lie has been often refuted and exposed is no reason why it should cease to pass for current coin. You cannot nail a lie to a shopboard as you can a bad shilling, and stop its circulation for ever. It must and will run on, till the motive which gives it birth, and the malignity which feeds it and keeps it alive, have been exhausted. But, says an objector, determined to think evil of his fellow-men, the Catholics do worship images, I care not for their catechisms, I have seen them. My good friend, I answer, God alone knows the heart, not you. Worship is an inward act, which you have not seen, and cannot see. I repeat again, it is entirely destitute of proof, and destitute of probability, that there should be any such worship. Images and crucifixes are used—as every man of sense uses the outward world—as symbols of the Divinity, and as means of exciting devotion.

Oh! but, continues the objector, the use of images in worship is entirely forbidden; do you suppose that the heathen

believed the images they worshipped to be Divine? They used them as symbols, and nothing more. I answer, I desire to be no wiser than Isaiah and David, and if this be, as it is often said to be by Protestants, a true account of the old heathen idolatry, then it is certain that Isaiah and David knew nothing about the matter. Turn for a moment to the magnificent invective of the former prophet,* in the forty-fourth chapter. Is the practice there denounced, the using of images as symbols? No; Isaiah denounces the besotted idolater, who believes that he can make a God; who heweth down cedars, and of the wood makes a fire, and on the coals thereof roasts meat, and eats thereof, and is satisfied, and of the residue HE MAKETH A GOD. *And he prays to it, and says unto it, deliver me, FOR THOU ART MY GOD.*

The practice denounced by the old Hebrew prophets involved three errors, which an understanding imbued with the Christian belief of an incorporeal, omnipresent God, has some difficulty in realizing to his mind, but which were then fatal realities. The first error was the belief in an infinity of Gods with human passions and human vices. The idolater, it is well known, prayed to his God for things too atrocious to be named among his fellow-men. He substituted for the worship of the true God, the adoration of the worst portions of his own nature, under the sanctions and forms of religion. Idolatry was in reality, a worship of devils. The second error was a belief that when the idol was fashioned, the devil to whom it was erected, joined himself to it, and became in a manner *incarnate* in the image, as the blessed SON of GOD became united to flesh and blood; and that the image which the idolater worshipped was a God, in the same sense as the man JESUS CHRIST, who was crucified on Mount Calvary, was God; and to represent the heathen worship as symbolical, is as complete a misrepresentation, as the heresy St. John writes against, of those who taught that CHRIST's life, death, and sufferings, were only symbolical and representative, not actual. In the heathen worship, the image was the God. The third error was, that the beings to whom these images and statues were erected, were no real existences, and never had been. The whole system was not only wicked, but it was false, and a lie. Now, of course, not one of these three objections can be charged against the Roman Catholics. One common form of idolatry among the nations

* Isaiah, c. 44.

by whom the Israelites were surrounded, and into which the Israelites themselves were constantly in danger of falling, was the worship of the sun, moon, and stars, and yet David does not scruple to use these works of God as symbols of his divinity, and to stimulate his devotion by meditating on them, and invoking them, and all created nature to join in offering thanksgivings to their Creator. Many of those whom I am addressing are, I doubt not, acquainted with Wordsworth's beautiful poem, "The Excursion." Let me for a moment suppose his Wanderer to be a Catholic instead of a Presbyterian, and let us accompany him through some of the scenes which the poet's imagination conjures up. In the morning, when he commences the labour and burden of the day,

—————"From the naked top
Of some bold headland, he beholds the sun
Rise up and bathe the world in light!"

As he gazes on the magnificent spectacle,

"Rapt into still communion that transcends
The imperfect offices of prayer and praise,
His mind is a thanksgiving to the power
That made him; it is blessedness and love!"

Into the inmost depths of his soul, as he pursues his daily course,

—————"The whispering air
Sends inspiration from the shadowy heights
And blind recesses of the caverned rocks."

And in some sequestered spot, where the rocks shut out all outward objects but the azure sky, the solitary raven, with his iron knell, flying athwart the dark blue dome, rouses within him devout aspirations, and gives him

"Far stretching views into eternity."

The day wanes, and he passes from these valleys and craggy defiles into "an elevated spot," where he beholds the sun

"Sinking with less than ordinary state;"

but as he sinks, "kindling into a blaze of light," through half the circle of the sky, the little floating clouds, which shed each on each

"With prodigal communion, the bright hues
Which from the unapparent fount of glory
They had imbibed and ceased not to receive."

His mind is filled with rapturous joy, and, falling prostrate on

the soft heath, there bursts from him, in holy transport, this devout invocation,—

“ Eternal Spirit! Universal God!
 Power inaccessible to human thought,
 Save by degrees and steps which Thou hast deigned
 To furnish; for this effluence of Thyself,
 To the infirmity of mortal sense
 Vouchsafed, this local, transitory type,
 Of thy paternal splendours, and the pomp
 Of those who fill thy courts in highest heaven,
 The radiant Cherubim; accept the thanks
 Which we, thy humble creatures, here convened,
 Presume to offer; we, who from the breast
 Of the frail earth, permitted to behold
 The faint reflections only of thy face,
 Are yet exalted, and in soul adore!”

The world is covered with darkness, as the pilgrim still pursues his weary way. He beholds in the distance a little glimmering light among the trees. He turns aside into a by-road, and approaches an humble chapel, where holy men, set apart for the service of God, offer up prayers day and night unceasingly. Oppressed with fatigue and travel-stained, longing for the hour when the labour of the day shall cease, and he can betake himself to his humble bed, he enters, and beneath a crucifix whereon is contained an image of our blessed SAVIOUR, suffering unutterable agony for his redemption, he prostrates himself with the lowest humility, thanking God for the life and death of that Divine teacher who came to make a religion of sorrow and self-denial; and he passes onwards more refreshed and more strengthened against the murmurings and complainings of his nature, by that symbol of his Redeemer's agony, than by all the splendour of the sun, all the glory of the heaven, all the divine magnificence of the earth. Let me ask, where is the idolatry, where is the unspirituality of all this? I answer, it is Christian worship, all of it; and this last act of devotion, the most spiritual of all. Men have worshipped the sun as a God; who is insane enough to say that the Wanderer has done so? Men have worshipped the elemental powers of nature, and the beasts which inhabit the earth, and the birds which fly through the air: but who accuses the humble Wanderer of idolatry, because they are to him symbols of the one God, and because, impressed by their presence, he devoutly offers up to his Creator the homage of a grateful heart? In like manner, men have worshipped idols, and in images of wood and stone have offered homage up to devils; but who

shall be mad enough to accuse our Wanderer of idolatry, because the image of CHRIST crucified is to him a symbol of the Redemption, recalling to him more forcibly than words or books the love of Him who died—the just for the unjust—to save him from eternal condemnation. Idolatry is a sin which in the present day is hardly conceivable, and it is this very difficulty which leads prejudiced persons to confound two things utterly dissimilar, the devotion of the Catholics, and the idolatrous blasphemy of the heathens.

That spiritual discipline which enables the mind to derive strength and nourishment from the use of symbols, is almost entirely unknown among Friends, and it is lamentable that it should be so. It was not so among the primitive Christians, of whom, though we have but scanty records of the minutiae of their proceedings, it is yet certain that they had many practices which proceeded from a great proficiency in the use of symbols, and which are now vulgarly supposed to be of Popish origin. The Lent fast, which is traced back to the Apostolic times, was itself a symbol of CHRIST's fast in the wilderness. Long before the Christians were safe, or wealthy enough to have large or ornamented places of worship, they had chalices for the Eucharist which were adorned with representations of our SAVIOUR in the character of the good shepherd. The same writer* who incidentally mentions this circumstance, tells us that in his time the "Popish practice" of crossing one's self was a practice universally used, and known to have been handed down by the Apostles. "When we walk, when we come in, when we go out, when we warm ourselves, go to bathe, sit at table, light candles, go to bed, in short in all our actions, and deportments, we mark ourselves with the sign of the cross. If you are obstinate in demanding Scripture for every discipline and usage of this kind," (it seems there were Protestants in those days, though even the heretics did not object to these particular traditions,) "you will find none. But they are supported by tradition which authorizes them, by custom which confirms them, and faith which observes them."† In their hours of prayer‡ through the day, they kept alive the memory of the sacred actions and events, by which certain hours were illustrated in Holy Writ. Thus, they selected for their devotions, the third, sixth, and ninth hours

* Tertullian de Pudicitia.

† De Coronâ Militis.
Tertullian on the Lord's Prayer, c. 19.

of the day, or nine, twelve, and three o'clock; because these hours were oftenest mentioned in Scripture. The HOLY GHOST descended at the third hour of the day of Pentecost.* At the sixth hour St. Peter went up to the house-top to pray,† and saw in his trance, the vision of the vessel let down from heaven to earth, which announced the admission of the Gentiles into the Church. At the ninth hour it was, that St. Peter and St. John went into the Temple,‡ and healed the man that had been lame from his mother's womb. Their prayers at home and in public worship were accompanied by the kiss of peace,§ (spoken of and recommended by the Apostle),|| which was given by men and women indiscriminately.¶ But during the public fasts and times of humiliation, this joyful salutation was not given.** In praying, they knelt in an attitude of supplication, with their hands raised to heaven, (as the Apostle says, "everywhere lifting up holy hands,") but extended, as the hands of CHRIST were on the cross.†† But in conformity with a custom, which was old in the time of Tertullian, they prayed standing, at the joyful solemnity of Easter, the anniversary of our LORD's resurrection. The fifty days which followed were devoted to religious exercises and acts of spiritual joy, and to abstinence, so far as it was practicable, from all worldly employments. But, at the same time, they abhorred all vain forms, not founded on any precept of God or the Apostles, that is, all forms which did not arise naturally from the genius of the Christian worship, established by Divine authority; and in particular, every thing that savoured of superstition, or seemed to be borrowed from Gentile customs. Thus Tertullian condemned the habit of wearing chaplets of flowers and military crowns, as a Pagan custom.‡‡ He censured those who took off their cloaks to pray, because the Pagans did so before their idols.§§ "The Apostles," says he, "have left us no such instruction." The distinction was drawn from the beginning, between ceremonies of a Pagan origin, and those sanctioned by Divine authority. Even innocent ceremonies became unlawful, if calculated to break down the barrier between Christianity and Paganism. They had their days of fasting, and their processions in the

* Acts ii., 15.

† Acts x., 9.

‡ Acts iii., 1.

§ Tertullian on the Lord's Prayer, c. xiv.

|| 1 Thessal., c. v., v. 26.

¶ Tertullian to his wife, Book ii. c. 4.

** On the Lord's Prayer, c. xiv.

†† Ibid. c. xi. ‡‡ De Coronâ Militis passim.

§§ On the Lord's Prayer, c. xii.

Churches.* They rose from their beds and assembled to pray at the hour of vigils. At the season of Easter they passed the whole night in the Churches. They brought water to wash the feet of the faithful, as CHRIST had taught them, and as the Church has never ceased to do.† These, and many more of the same kind, were (A.D. 200,) known to be long established customs, handed down from the Apostles, and zealously defended as such, by men, who, if I may so speak, were fanatically jealous of the most innocent custom that could be judged to have a Pagan origin. The period of which I am speaking was only half a century after the death of St. Polycarp, the great disciple and contemporary of St. John.

We have already seen, that they defended these practices against the heretics, who corrupted the Scriptures by the arguments of tradition. Take another passage of the same purport. "To all these corrupters of the Gospel, we oppose the invincible argument of prescription. We say, that the only true religion is that which was taught by JESUS CHRIST, and has been handed down to us by the Apostles, who preceded these innovators."‡ Or the following; "but these heretics say, they rely only on the Scriptures; as if we could only prove matters of faith out of the books of the faith."§ The faith, the true doctrine and practice, were known by and from the Church; "what CHRIST has revealed, can only be learned from the Churches which the Apostles have founded, and which they have taught by word and by letter."|| "Disputing about the Scripture is good for nothing but to weary the head and lungs."¶ "CHRIST has sent to take his place, the HOLY SPIRIT to illuminate and conduct his Church."**

Such was the practice of the early Christians, and such the grounds on which it was defended. Every where, according to their means, they gathered round them outward symbols of their religion. Its history was not kept close in books for the peculiar use of those to whom reading was easy and pleasant, and for whom books were cheap and plentiful; but it was depicted on chalices, it was stamped on every thing around them, it was commemorated in every action, and many times in every day, some external symbol of Christianity forced upon

* Tertullian to his wife, Book ii., c. 4. There is some doubt as to the meaning of "*procedendum*" in this passage.

† Ibid. c. v.

‡ Tertullian's Apology, c. 47.

§ On Prescriptions, c. 15.

¶ Ibid. c. 21.

|| Ibid. c. 16.

** Ibid. c. 13.

their attention the facts and the feelings of which that religion is made up. This *was* the practice of the primitive Christians; this *is* the practice of the Catholic Church, and Protestants, in denouncing this practice, and the principle on which it rests, must acknowledge that the superstitions of the Catholics have been superstitions of the Church for eighteen centuries.

And whence did the early Christians in these times of primitive fervour, and when they had cast off every rag and vestige of Judaism, and entertained the greatest horror of Pagan ceremonies, derive all these customs? Does any one imagine that within a hundred years after the death of the Apostles, the whole form and appearance of Christianity had become altered, and men throughout the whole of Christendom, from France to the borders of India, from Thrace to Rome and Carthage, had combined to substitute a polluted worship for the pure simplicity of the Gospel? or rather, that within a hundred years after the Apostles, a spurious scheme of Christian worship had been universally established throughout all the Churches, and was even then of such antiquity as to be universally believed by the wisest, and purest, and most learned of men, to be of unbroken tradition from Apostolic times? I can imagine no greater stretch of credulity than is required to believe this. I do not hesitate to say, that whoever believes this must be prepared to give up the authority of the Scriptures themselves. For if the first century of Christianity was so corrupt and worthless, if such impostures had by that time been practised on the whole Christian world, if the commands of the Apostles had been so universally broken, if there had been such a common agreement to substitute in every part of the worship—superstition for pure Christianity—it is impossible for any man to have any confidence in the integrity with which the sacred writings were preserved. Men who combined thus early to falsify the worship, may just as easily have combined to falsify the Scriptures. It is at least certain, that a mode of worship, of praying, of practising spiritual exercises, fundamentally different from that of Friends, prevailed in the very earliest times, of which we have any account, and had grown old within a hundred years after the death of the Apostles. It is certain that a hundred years after the Apostles, Christians had long used a worship and ceremonies, which involved opinions fundamentally different from those of Friends, as to the use of the outward world in religion.

We are now further removed from George Fox than the Christians of Tertullian's time were from St. Peter and St. Paul. In and around the Society of Friends, there have sprung up abuses, heresies, sects, schisms, dissensions; but the main body of the Society holds on its course unbroken, and none of its members entertain a doubt as to the main points of the belief and practice of George Fox and his contemporaries. Their books and memoirs have been preserved; and what is more than all this, the private records of their business, of their meetings for discipline, and their habits of worship and of thought, have been handed down from father to son, and we know them to be substantially unaltered. What then? Does any one imagine the primitive Christians were less careful of the traditions of their fathers than the Friends?—Does any one suppose that Baptism and the Eucharist, and forms of prayer and stated fasts, could have been universally revived in the Church, and become old within a hundred years after the death of the Apostles, if the Apostles had ever abolished them, or suffered them to die out during their lives? The thing is morally impossible. No man can seriously believe it. The very practices in question mark the respect of the early Christians for the times before them; their anxiety to cherish every fragment of the teaching of the Apostles, their hatred of every addition and pollution from a Pagan source, their complete renunciation of all feeling of attachment to the Jewish law. The feeling of the Christians of those times was that of positive aversion to the Jews. "Israel," says Tertullian,* "washes his whole body every day, and yet he is never pure. His hands can never be purified from the blood of the prophets, and from that of CHRIST. His sense of the crime of his fathers, does not allow him to lift his hands towards heaven (in prayer) lest a new Isaiah should cry out to him 'Abomination!'" Regarding them both—Judaism and Paganism—with feelings of aversion and horror, from whence did they derive that system of organization, government, and worship, which was old in the time of Tertullian, and of which the Society of Friends does not retain a shred or a vestige; nay more, which is radically at variance with all the feelings, views, and opinions of Friends? My answer is, that they derived it from God, from CHRIST, from the Apostles. It was of Divine origin. The question admits of no other reply.

* On the Lord's Prayer, c. 11.

It is, indeed, a matter deserving of the most serious consideration of every Friend, how this use of, and love for, outward symbols as helps to spiritual worship, could have originally obtained a footing in the Christian Church. Long before the time of Tertullian the great bulk of the Christian converts were Gentiles, who were averse to Judaism, and who, on their conversion, embraced a mode of life the most opposite to their preceding Paganism. They were men who were called off by the Spirit of God, from a worship of forms that were unmeaning, to a worship in spirit and in truth. They were men who embraced the new religion with a fervour that has appeared to the coldness of modern times, almost fanatical. Now, what one would naturally expect from men under these circumstances is, that if they erred at all, they would err in the violent antipathy they manifested for every thing bearing the faintest resemblance to their old practices. We have instances in modern times which seem to illustrate exactly this tendency of the human mind. What was the conduct of those, who with the most fervour separated from the Catholic Church in the sixteenth century? Did they not demolish monasteries, break the painted windows of Cathedrals, pluck down images, rake up and defile the bones and relics of the Saints and Martyrs of God, exterminate with a blind vengeance everything that could remind them of the hated Popery? Were not the beautiful and sublime services of the Anglicans hateful even to Milton, because taken from the Catholic Missal, so that to him the book of Common Prayer was but the "skeleton of the Mass Book?" So strongly was this feeling shewn that sagacious Protestants began to be alarmed, and to remark, how the throwing off of one superstition or heresy inevitably begets an opposite one.* Accordingly, something of the same passionate aversion to the systems they had abandoned, *did* exhibit itself among the early converts; for we learn from Tertullian, that it was their constant habit to defile the monuments of Paganism, and one of the minor difficulties, Tertullian imagines, in the way of the marriage of a Christian woman with a heathen is, that she will not be able thus to express her contempt for the idols of heathen worship. Coming, then, from a worship of forms and outward ceremonies to a worship in spirit and in truth, we might naturally expect that they would, like the early

* Bacon.

Friends, have been remarkable for their aversion to all outward forms whatever. Having been set free moreover from the Jewish law, and entertaining a rooted aversion to Judaism, we might have expected that they would signalize their aversion by violently throwing off everything that bore the remotest resemblance to a Jewish type. But what is the fact? Every monument that remains to us of primitive Christianity proves that the earliest Christians far surpassed both Jews and Pagans in the profusion of their outward symbols. And how do we imagine that this was brought about? How was it that the strong antipathies of the early Christians to both Judaism and Paganism, did not produce their natural effects? It was because the hand of God had stamped upon the very inmost organization of the Church the symbolical character which it has ever possessed. Fervent and devout as the early Christians were, we might have imagined that, like the old Puritans, they would feel forms an incumbrance and a burden. Spiritual as they were to an extraordinary degree, one would have expected that, like the Friends, they would have a holy horror of polluting the worship of God within them, by any outward admixture. And yet the real state of the case is at variance with these expectations in the most marked manner. How do we account for this? Some potent cause there must have been to counteract in the beginning this natural tendency of the human mind.

The truth is, that not in the Mosaic law alone, but in all the teachings of God to man, He has vouchsafed to speak to us through symbols. The peculiarity of the Mosaic law consisted in this, that its symbols were types of something to come,—the redemption of mankind, by the sacrifice on the cross; and with the accomplishment of this, the whole system of prefiguring types was swept away. But the necessary abrogation of the Jewish figures did not involve the abolition of symbolic teaching. The covenant of God with Noah, as the representative of the human race, was established by an outward symbol, which was not affected by the abolition of the Jewish rites; and the bow in the clouds is, and will be to the end of time, a symbol of God's mercy, and of his promise, that He will no more curse the ground for man's sake, and that the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. Nay, the Christian dispensation has evolved a new symbol from the flood, which was not manifest before; for now the waters of the deluge, by which the earth was purged of her sinful inha-

bitants, have become a type or figure of the waters of baptism, which are not intended to cleanse away the filth of the flesh, but as a sacrament wherein the sinfulness of the heart is purged away by grace.*

Behold, too, the very ground of our faith, the cross on which our blessed SAVIOUR was crucified! What a symbol is there of the loving-kindness of the LORD, the eternal agony from which He hath redeemed us, and the life of self-crucifixion which all true Christians were thenceforth to lead. The very life of CHRIST, real and substantial as it was from infancy to death, is on that very ground of value to us as a symbol. It was not for himself that the LORD of heaven took upon him the form of a servant, and made himself of no reputation, and lived a life of obedience, and died a death of infamy. It was for us, it was to present us, whom God will not save merely by an inward teaching, with an outward symbol of the life and death of the just man made perfect. And when, at the most awful hour which has visited a sinful world, the veil of the temple was rent in twain, and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent, and the graves were opened, these awful convulsions of nature were but outward types of the dread spiritual conflict; and when the bodies of the saints arose and went into the holy city, it was but a type of the glorious victory over death and the resurrection unto life that was to follow. The very teaching of CHRIST himself is in parables, and though St. John shews us some of the less veiled discourses with which our SAVIOUR vouchsafed to instruct his chosen Apostles, yet have they, for the most part, preserved a record only of those which are parabolic and symbolical. The baptism of the Apostles was to be by the HOLY GHOST, and by fire; and accordingly, when this highest grace was conferred upon them, it was heralded by a sound from heaven, as of the rushing of a mighty wind, which filled all the house where they were sitting; and it was accompanied by cloven tongues as of fire, which sat upon each of them. The discourses and actions of the Apostles are everywhere symbolical. The extraordinary gifts of the HOLY GHOST which illustrated the early Church, were bestowed by the laying on of the Apostles' hands. The saints pray by the Apostles' direction, "everywhere lifting up holy hands." The union of man and woman in marriage is made the symbol of the mysterious union of CHRIST and his Church. Which is the most symbolical of all

* 1 Peter, iii. 20-1.

the sacred writings? Assuredly the last, the Apocalypse, with its wonderful mystic revelation, not only of the state of the churches of Asia, but of the future judgments and dealings of God with his elect. Though the meaning and intent of the symbols may be different, yet in the Bible, new and old, we see everywhere Spirit, everywhere symbol; and assuredly it hath been the design of the Spirit that all things should be revealed to us, for the most part, not by direct insight, as they behold who enjoy the blessed vision of God, but by symbols; "for now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face."

We ought to beware of the pride which may whisper to us, that in these days of spiritual teaching, it is our privilege to attain to the knowledge of the things of the Spirit by immediate vision, without the need of outward symbols. Why should we suppose that there was no motive for that symbolical teaching, which commences with the Pentateuch, and ends with the Revelations? Surely this mode of instruction was adopted throughout the sacred writings, because it is peculiarly adapted to the faculties of man. For all men, wise as well as foolish, learned as well as ignorant, a symbol, whether in words or things, is far more significant, far more impressive, far more capable of conveying spiritual meaning than any direct form of speech. The deepest things cannot be uttered plainly and directly. The things of sense may be described clearly in perspicuous language. The things of the Spirit cannot be *described* at all; they can only be *suggested* by some type or symbol, or metaphor, which is at once a help to the weak and ignorant, and a powerful stimulant to reflection in the wiser and more profound. Why would we be esteemed more spiritual than St. John the Evangelist, to whom, when God designed to reveal to him the deepest mysteries, he spoke by a vision of outward material objects, of candlesticks and vials, and trumpets, and beasts, and elders. And so it has been with all the prophets; the deepest mysteries have always been revealed to them through visions like this. In like manner our blessed SAVIOUR, knowing the excellence and the depth of symbols, even while he abolished the prefiguring types of the old law, which of necessity ceased when they were fulfilled, yet continued this symbolic instruction in the parables, by which he taught his disciples verbally, and in the sacraments of grace, which he instituted for the perpetual nourishment of his faithful. And though CHRIST told his Apostles that the time was coming

when he would speak to them no more in parables, yet it is these very parables which, of all our SAVIOUR'S discourses, the Apostles have judged most necessary for us to know, for they have preserved little else. Why would we be more spiritual than the Apostles, who both recorded these parables for the instruction of all mankind, and preserved and faithfully handed to their successors those sacramental symbols which the Friends have wholly rejected? Indeed, it is not safe to reject that mode of teaching which CHRIST and his Apostles have judged most fitted for us.—It is, indeed, easy, though not safe or profitable, for a small company of devout persons, like the Friends, to dispense with outward symbols; for the constant watchfulness which exists in a body of limited numbers, ensures of itself the recurrence of good and holy thoughts. But for the mass of mankind, busily occupied from morning till night with the things of the world, experience too fatally proves, that for them, either the things of sense must be raised up to Heaven by the Spirit, or they will drag the Spirit down to Hell. Either everything outward that men come in contact with from day to day, and every hour, must be made a symbol of eternal excellence, or it will make the mind Pagan. For no man can be constantly engaged with the outward world without having his mind most potently affected by it. Either the outward world must be made to minister to religion, or it will of itself minister to Hell. There is no way by which the minds of men can be saved from that worst idolatry, the worship of Mammon and of the joys of sense, other than by making the things of sense symbols of that which is above. And how is this to be brought about? How is the mind of man to be so trained, that in everything around him he shall behold symbols of the Divinity; that in every action of his life the man shall seem to utter a spiritual hymn of the past mercies or judgments of God? How was it that the early Christians, spiritual and devout, and zealous even to martyrdom, as they were, were trained so that every moment of their lives they should spontaneously express themselves in some symbol of the history of the Christian dispensation? For it is indeed true, that outward signs of merely human invention are burdensome, and in their own nature formal. Now, these evidently sprung from, and tended to keep alive, the deepest spiritual life.

What explanation can be given of all this? It can only be accounted for from the fact that the Church instituted by

CHRIST was itself an outward visible symbol of an inward infinite essence, and that men who had received into their hearts the meaning of the great symbol of all, could not but exhibit in every act of their lives, small as well as great, some expression of the mystery they had been taught of God. For what is the incarnation, the birth, the life, the death of our Blessed SAVIOUR? It is eternity depicted under the symbol of time. It is infinitude under the symbol of finite space. It is He, the Supernatural, who created nature innocent, become manifest in flesh and blood, under the symbol of that nature, to redeem it from the fall of sin. And from this grand mystery of all, have flowed all the lesser mysteries of the Church of CHRIST. For when the Heavens were opened, and a voice issued forth, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," a mystery and a symbol were there;—the descending of the Spirit of God upon CHRIST, under the symbol of a dove, and lighting upon him. And when JESUS took Peter and James and John into a high mountain apart, again there was a mystery—the glory which the SON had with the FATHER before the world was, under the symbol of the Transfiguration, his face shining as the sun, and his raiment white as the light; and the old law, under the type of Moses, its institutor, and Elias, its restorer, doing homage to Him whose sacrifice their sacrifices prefigured. And on the day of Pentecost, there was again a mystery—the infusion of the HOLY GHOST into the hearts of the Apostles, under the symbol of tongues of fire. And what is Baptism? It is the infusion of the spirit of regeneration into the heart, under the symbol of water. And what is the Eucharist? It is the manifestation of the Divinity under the symbols of bread and wine, to nourish and sustain the soul with heavenly food. And what is Confirmation? It is the grace of spiritual manhood, under the symbol of laying on of hands. And what is Penance? It is the Grace of God giving health and renovation to the contrite heart, under the symbols of Confession and Absolution. And what is marriage? It is the Grace of God uniting man and woman in a spiritual union, to make them a fitting type of the union of CHRIST and his Church. And what is the anointing of the sick? It is the Grace of God smoothing the troubled passage out of life, under the symbol of an earthly unction. And what is Ordination? It is the Grace of God endowing his ministers with priestly functions, and with spiritual authority, as his vicars in the Church of CHRIST, under the apostolic symbol of the laying on of hands. And

what is the Church of CHRIST itself? It is the Grace of God in CHRIST uniting in one mystical body the souls of his redeemed ones, manifested upon earth, under the symbol of men and women, in subordination to, and communion with, his ordained Priesthood, through whose hands he dispenses for their nourishment all the choicest treasures of his infinite mercy. And what are the offices of the Church? They are the benedictions of God, the graces and assistances of the Spirit dispensed for the edification of the faithful, through the outward channels of ordinance. And though the Priest may, perchance, be corrupt, and the outward member of the Church no true servant of CHRIST, and there be many an inward member whom the eye of man cannot recognise, yet now, as ever, that Church, visible upon earth, is the mystical body of CHRIST; the true refuge of all souls that hunger and thirst after righteousness; the visible and perpetual symbol of the invisible Church — the everlasting spouse of CHRIST,—which the eye of God alone can recognise. If the Priest be corrupt, woe to him. He is not the less the steward of the mysteries of God.

He must have ill read his Bible, methinks, — he must be little versed in the order of God's Providence, — who cannot recognise in the despotic ruler, the executor of God's decrees; in the unjust judge, the dispenser of the judgments of God; in the corrupt priest, the spiritual officer in CHRIST's household. It is not the individual, it is the place. It is not the piety or impiety of the man, it is the ordinance of God. Here, as elsewhere, is a symbol; man, sinful man, the minister and representative of God. The Scribes and Pharisees did not the less sit in the seat of Moses, because it was said to them, "Woe unto you hypocrites!" The High Priest who ordered St. Paul to be smitten, was not the less the Priest of God because he was unjust, and a railer. The teaching of the Apostles, the doctrine of CHRIST, had impregnated men's minds with this world-old doctrine of symbols, which our modern sensuality hath well-nigh forgotten, and which we should have utterly lost, had not the Grace of God watched over his Church in the worst of times, and reserved her, now that the evil day has passed, to a new course of triumph and victory.

It was these symbolic sacraments, the very marrow of the Gospel, which inforced men in all their actions to express themselves by typical representations. The early Christians well knew that it was the mystical union of the Divinity with

flesh and blood in the incarnation whereby the latter was redeemed ; and it was this same union of the created and uncreated, the natural and the supernatural, the world of sense and the world of spirit, which they could not but endeavour to embody in every action of their lives. God, who had joined himself to flesh and blood for their redemption, had, in like manner, joined his graces and the gifts of his Holy Spirit to outward ordinances, in the sacraments of the Church ; and the worship of the faithful, that is, their whole lives, was made to carry out in detail the Divine scheme. They laboured, — following the Apostolic injunctions, — to make every act of their lives a lesser sacrament ; they believed that it was most humble and most safe in matters not absolutely enjoined, to seek for grace in following the analogy of that which was enjoined. Hence came those ceremonies, for the most part coeval with Christianity, which seem carnal and formal to the uninitiated, just as they seemed detestable and wicked to the heathens ; but which, to those whose minds have received that symbolic culture which every sincere Catholic cannot help receiving, in the habitual use of the sacraments, are not only in themselves great helps to devotion, but enable the mind in every indifferent action of life, to rise above the things of sense, not by a vain effort to overthrow and abolish them, but by using them as incitements to spiritual contemplation, as steps on which to mount upwards to the world of spiritual life.

This is the plain and sober truth of a matter that may furnish laughter for the unthinking, but yet is in reality of infinite moment to us all. In our times, the spiritual senses are so blunted, that we believe symbols to be but metaphors and figures of speech, whereas they are the highest possessions of man while in this world. They are the chosen channels through which the grace of God has ever been, and still continues to be communicated to man. In the present day of scepticism, men cannot be made to understand what was the simplest of all truths in the ages of faith, that what appeals to the outward senses, has a higher function than to satisfy outward wants, or a higher character than can be judged of by the natural man. A king is but a man ; shall we revere our equal, one of ourselves ? A priest is but a man ; shall we ask forgiveness of sins of our equal, one of ourselves ? An image is but the carving of man's fingers, shall we become idolaters ? A church is but brick and stone, and wood ; shall we call holy that which is mere brute inert matter, of a lower nature than ourselves ?

The bones of a saint, though they shall one day rise at the sound of the trump of God, and form for ever the glorified tabernacle of a redeemed and justified soul in the court of the highest God, are to our sensual carnal apprehensions no better than the common dirt we tread upon.

We have studiously brought every thing down to the same vulgar level ; we have done our best to extirpate all trace of the redemption from the outward world ; we have with all our might ridiculed the confiding faith of the elder and better times ; we have done our best, and in sooth with unmatched success, to Paganize everything that the eye can look upon, or the ear can hear, or the hand can touch, and we wonder at the result. Of old, before an artist commenced a painting or a statue, or an edifice, he confessed his sins to a priest, and performed penance, and partook of the body and blood of his SAVIOUR. Now, we have found all this to be superstitious ; but painting, and sculpture, and architecture are no more, and we spend our time in vain inquiries as to the cause, because we cannot be made to see that art never flourished except in the service of faith. Of old, the lowest commonalty knew the Bible stories by heart, and could chant the Psalms of David, and were not ashamed of religion, and were humble enough to understand the duty of obedience, and to practise it, and frequented the public worship of their God every day with devout hearts. Now, we have spread the Gospel light so successfully, that thousands, nay millions of our poor countrymen, know at best no more of religion than they pick up from some strolling cobbler, and the more part are proud, intractable, and resolute in their defiance of all teaching, and all subordination whatever.* A Protestant nobility two centuries and a half ago, taught them the lesson of independence on all guidance from above ; and now they will shew the fruits of that independence, to the peril of those from whom the lesson came, unless the Catholic clergy are suc-

* Hear on this subject a popular Evangelical clergyman of the present day :—
 “ In the worst days of Popery, Christ was acknowledged, however hypocritically, and provision was made for religious worship of the population. Our oldest towns, and the city of London itself, in its oldest part, are nearly adequately provided with churches. It is modern worldliness and secularity that has wholly separated the largest mass of the inhabitants of this land from CHRIST, and spread under the whole apparent prosperity of the kingdom, the most tremendous of all means for a fearful explosion.”—The Rev. Ed. Bickersteth’s “ Remarks on the Dangers of the Church of CHRIST.” The fact thus stated is undeniable. The “ *however hypocritically*,” is, to use the mildest term, a strange exhibition of ignorance.

cessful in bringing them within an organization, and a discipline, which Protestantism cannot furnish. The wealthier classes are devoted to the pursuit of riches, and the wealth, which in old times would have been employed in rearing some monument to religion, is now squandered in personal display and ostentation. We have bent all our efforts to exclude the things of sense from the service of religion; we have succeeded to our hearts' content; and in return we are justly rewarded by discovering that we have succeeded in banishing the influence of religion from all the things of sense, and from every worldly pursuit.

I say, then, it is impossible to account for what we know to have been the habits of worship of the early Christians, except by referring them to the Catholic sacraments, and the mental training which they supplied. Unless the primitive Christians had been habituated to the reception of the Grace of God, through outward symbols, and unless these symbols, and the grace which accompanied them, had formed the very marrow and essence of their religion, it is impossible to account for that tendency of the early Christians to make every outward act an occasion of a symbol. For who were the early Christians? They were, the mass of them, from the lower classes of society; men, many of whom had been plunged in crimes and sensuality, and most of whom had been unaccustomed, in that age of atheism, to any serious belief whatever. These men of various habits and countries become Christians, and all at once they assume the practice of the most refined, systematic, and spiritual system of symbolic worship that the world has ever seen—a system that has had a greater empire over men, and nourished more great minds, and produced more great works of art, than any system that ever existed;—for it is to be borne in mind, that the worship discoverable in the earliest records of Christianity is the same in principle and practice with the Catholic worship, and hence all Protestant writers, except those who have laboured to bring back Protestantism to Catholicism, have discountenanced and ridiculed the early Christian writers. And how then did the Church all at once assume this character? I defy any person to explain the facts otherwise than by the admission that the Apostles in the very beginning stamped upon the Christian worship in its holiest and most mysterious parts—that is, the sacraments,—a character of symbolism which naturally communicated itself to every subordinate part of the system.

The miscellaneous herd of atheists, sinners, and worldlings who must have formed the bulk of the early Christians, had no predisposition of their own to a worship of refined symbolism. But if the faith and worship which they received from the Apostles *compelled* them to believe heartily, that certain spiritual influences were mysteriously connected with certain symbolical forms, then it is easy to understand that in every other part of their worship they would look to connect spiritual blessings with like symbolic acts. Without the belief of the Catholic sacraments, from the commencement, it is impossible to account for the existence of the Catholic worship, which in all points that are at all repulsive to a Friend, it is admitted, mounts up to the very earliest periods of which we have any detailed notice. Take away the hearty and fervent belief in the sacraments, and you have—as in the Anglican Establishment—a number of rules and arrangements, dictated by mere human prudence, for the celebration of worship with decency and order. You have a mere human system of contrivances, for the sake of regularity—any one of which might be taken away to-morrow, without any other feeling than that it was a pity to disturb an old arrangement. You have a system which enshrines the very genius of human prudence, carried perhaps to its highest point. But you have not what there was in the early Church, and what has ever been in the Church of Catholic Christianity, a supernatural organization of symbols, springing necessarily from the root of Divine ordinance, pervaded everywhere by Divine grace, and nourishing the soul with Divine grace, of which no part can be touched or removed without sensible injury to the whole.

Protestantism, nor no worship imbued with the spirit of Protestantism, will ever add a type or a symbol to what it has already; nay, it can hardly retain those which it has not thrown off. The tendency of Protestantism is to reject symbols in worship. The tendency of the primitive Church was to assume them. There must then have been a radical difference between the spirit of the worship of the primitive Christians and that of the Protestants, and this difference can be traced to nothing but the sacraments. Plant in a new country the Catholic religion of the sacraments, and of itself it will necessarily issue forth, like primitive Christianity, in a worship of Divine symbols, produced by faith, and nourishing faith in its turn. Plant in a new country the Protestant scheme, and it will gather round it a certain decent regularity

of public prayers, and, it may be, eloquent preaching, but nothing more. It could never grow into any form akin to Catholicism. If the primitive worship had been imbued with the Protestant spirit, it could never have issued in Catholicism. Catholic Christianity could never have sprung from a Protestant origin. It had its birth in a nobler region. It hath been sent down from heaven unto the children of men, by the inspiration of the Divinity.

People have often told me they wondered at my becoming a Catholic, and not rather joining the Anglican system. My answer is, that a person who has imbibed ever so little of the spirituality of Quakerism, is not likely, if he can get anything better, to put up with the human patch-work of the Anglican Church. It is a system of compromises, of shifts, of expedients. Becoming an Anglican, a man must profess a faith outwardly, and disbelieve part of it in his heart. Or at least, he must profess the faith as a whole, but keep silence on many parts of it that he disapproves, for fear of scandalizing the weaker brethren, or propagating dissent. The character of Protestantism is everywhere the same. A Protestant Church is a manufacture, not a Divine growth. A man on Protestant principles must either stand alone, in order to preserve his wholeness of mind, as many of the noblest and most devout Protestants have done,—and are still doing,—and they call this, “keeping a sacred silence on Divine things,” forgetting the language of the Apostle, that “with the mouth confession is made unto salvation;” or if they think an outward union is of some benefit to society, they come together on a *give and take principle*; “You give up part of your creed, and I will give up part of mine”: or more cunningly still, We will draw up a set of articles, that on all difficult points shall speak a vague language, which may include the most discordant opinions, which any one may subscribe to, and no one know what it means. The offspring of a mere human wisdom and natural sagacity,—it exists by compromise, by mutual surrender, not by firm and perfect communion of feeling. Most opposite to this is the fundamental principle of the Society of Friends. In that Society there is no compromise, no mutual surrender. Its members, so far as they are true to their calling, are united by nothing but what they believe to be a Divine revelation, which they are bound on peril of their salvation to follow, without any respects of human prudence; and this guidance they follow in every concern of life, from the highest matters

of religion, to the lowest matters of worldly policy. Here is no compromise, no halfness, as in the Protestant communions. There is, as in the Catholic Church, an implicit submission to what is believed to be the teaching of God, and to no other power whatever.

The Anglican system, worldly in its origin, is naturally wanting in divine nurture, in real spiritual life. Its forms, its ceremonies, its ordinances, are *formal*, repressive of the free development of spiritual growth. They are all devoted and adapted to the production of this one result, outward decency and uniformity. The ordinances of the Catholic Church, on the other hand, originally sprung from, and are by their own nature nutritive of, the highest spiritual life.

The Anglican Establishment is a piece of human mechanism. It is like one of those rustic arbours formed of unplanned branches, which holds out some shew of vegetation, because its frame work has been cut from a living tree, but it has no interior life; and you may take away any of its parts without injury to what remains. Yet for a while men sit, and live, and are merry within it. But in a short time the under timbers become decayed, and the worm eats into the substance, and men come and repair a little here and a little there, and as it goes on consuming inwardly, they cover it every year with some deceitful varnish, that gives it a false appearance of youth and freshness. But at last it will hold no longer, and they sweep it away as unprofitable lumber, and gather the fragments together, and heap them up for burning.

The Catholic Church, on the other hand, is a tree of Divine growth, which springs from a soil that the Divine blessing has made fertile; and it strikes its roots deep into the earth, and spreads its branches aloft into the sky; and it drops down its boughs on all sides of it, and they penetrate into new soil and take root, and again rise up and become themselves trees, and the parents of new vegetation; and in a little time the earth is beautified with a forest of trees, all deriving their principle of life from the parent, around which they bloom and flourish, and which is the Holy Mother of them all. And as trees have their period when the sap rises, when they put forth in succession leaves, and flowers, and fruit; and at last winter comes and strips them of all their outward honours, and they seem to the ignorant, who knows not of the coming spring, fit only for the axe of the woodman, and ready for burning; so is it with this Divine Tree. It too

has its time when the sap rises, and circulates freely through all its branches, and bursts forth in every twig; and it too puts forth leaves, and flowers, and fruit; and it too has its winter when it seems for a time dying or dead, to him that knows not the mystery of the revolving year; though even then, like the orange tree, it bears upon it fruit hastening to ripeness. And the unskilled man, greedy of destruction, calls aloud for the axe of the spoiler, and longs for the consummation that is never to take place. For the winter passes away, and the soft breath of spring touches its dry members, and the sap rises from the soil of divine fertility, and penetrates to every fibre, and it sends out new shoots, and it plants new trees in distant places of the earth, and it breaks out into a second life, and stretches out wider than before, and again puts out its leaves, and flowers, and fruit; so that he who before cried out for the axe and the fire, is now constrained to exclaim, "The hand of the LORD hath done it. Behold, this tree is sacred to the LORD. It shall live for ever, and shall not die."

Now, it is against the Protestant forms that the Friends protested; it is these which they have known; it is these which they have justly condemned as unspiritual. On the Catholic rites and ceremonies they have never pronounced an opinion, for with the Catholic worship they have never come in contact, and the mass even of well-informed Friends know as little of it as they do of the worship of the Moslem or the Hindoo.* It has been my privilege, and a glorious privilege I know it to be, to be one of the very first to explore this unknown land of Catholicism. Though evil spoken of by the unfaithful spies who from time to time have pretended to give some report of it, I know it to be a land flowing with milk and honey, abounding in the choicest blessings of God. As a child who has lost himself, he knows not where, far from home, returns weeping and weary to his mother's breast, so after long wandering in darkness, seeking for truth, but finding no rest, because I could find no certainty, I have at length come, tired out with profitless labour, to find repose and consolation within that temple, whose eternal gates are ever open

* Nothing but a total ignorance of the Catholic divines, and the Catholic habits of mind, can account for the manner in which such books as Sewell's History of Friends speak of the rise of Quakerism, as the first revival after a darkness of centuries, of the principle of the inward guidance of the Holy Spirit. Friends should read the life of St. Teresa.

to invite the weary and erring pilgrim to enter in, and partake of heavenly refreshment. I have accepted the invitation. I have entered in; and within I have found, not the mutilated limbs of Truth, but the glorious Virgin herself, in all her celestial radiance; so that I cannot but exclaim with St. Austin in the like case, "Oh beauty, ever ancient, and yet ever new! Why have I known thee so late?" Having this knowledge, I should have been an unfaithful witness if I had not at once done my best to send the good tidings abroad. I could not but make known to my friends the blessings which are in store for them whenever they shall choose to make the like experiment with myself.

I know it is not uncommon for those who quit the Society of Friends, and join any other religious body, to be accused of pride, of a devotion to what is outward, of an aversion to inward spiritual worship, of self-seeking in some shape or other, of too great a reliance on human learning. Now, though it may seem to those who are disposed to find fault, to savour of self-praise, yet in order that no such feeling as this may stand in the way of any person who may be inclined to look more closely into the matter, I will venture to say, that the Catholic religion is at no time peculiarly calculated for the nourishment of pride, and that especially the present is not a time, when an Englishman can make profession of the Catholic faith from any pride or self-will; neither can a reliance on human learning be supposed to lead a man to renounce his own private judgment, and avow his own incompetence to discuss or decide. Neither, I hope, will it be alleged that an aversion to spiritual worship has seduced me from a worship too spiritual for me, inasmuch as having some little acquaintance with the worship of Friends, I leave it for a worship which I believe to be far more spiritual, not by virtue of the men who compose it, but of the miraculous endowments of Heaven.

These things, I say, not in a spirit of boasting, but gently, if I may, to disarm what I know have been and will be the first hard thoughts of every one. It is not an easy thing to appear as if I desired to instruct and inform men, far my superiors in every personal respect. It is not an easy thing for me to assume a position, where I shall appear to many perhaps ridiculous, and presumptuous to all. But it is far harder than all these things can be, to know that, insignificant as I am, I have perhaps the opportunity of awakening the

attention of some out of those numbers whom I believe to be in error, and leading them towards the one fold of CHRIST, and a participation in the spirit-feeding sacraments of His Church; to know that I have this opportunity, have had it, and have thrown it away for ever. This is not a comfortable reflection for a man to carry with him to his grave, and, accordingly, it must be my excuse for the apparent presumptuousness of this undertaking. If but one person imperfectly satisfied with the principles of Friends, shall by my means be attracted to an examination of the Catholic faith, and on examination shall be induced by the knowledge that others have done so before him, to lay aside all human respects, and embrace the truth for the truth's sake, great will be my reward.

And, surely, there never was a time better fitted to excite well-grounded hope. The late schism spreading so widely, and agitating the Society so deeply, is no matter of trivial moment. It is a symptom which, taken in connexion with other things that force themselves on one's notice, announces a great change in the tone and feeling of the Society. For what was the form in which the dissension broke out? A large body of most respectable and intelligent men felt justly dissatisfied with the tenet of Friends, as to the absolute supremacy and complete guidance of the inward teaching of the Spirit. They felt the necessity of some outward revealed rule as the guide and measure of this inward teaching, and in the present temper of the times, I do not wonder at their adopting the first rule that came to hand,—the Scriptures. Feeling, as they did, a very diminished confidence in the infallibility of that inward individual teaching, which has led so many men such different ways, they naturally began to examine the Bible with a little more of the Protestant right of private judgment; and it is no wonder they were led to believe that the outward ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper were of Divine institution. They have left the Society with the regret, I believe, of most persons, that they should have felt compelled to leave one religious body with so little (apparently) of a clear and decided opinion as to the course it would be their duty afterwards to adopt. For they now seem to most persons to occupy no definite position whatever, to stand together upon no clear principle. They are very nearly Friends, but not quite. They differ, so far as I can understand, in the degree of emphasis which should be laid on certain propositions, rather than in the propositions themselves. This

is undoubtedly a painful position for men to be in ; but who shall say that in the step they took they did not, so far as they knew, follow the inward guidance of the Spirit ?

Now, this division having spread so deeply and so widely, is a proof of the extent to which dissatisfaction with the principles of the early Friends has been carried. For we are not to suppose that those who remain behind are all very firmly convinced of the infallible guidance of the Holy Spirit to each individual. Oh no ! the contrary is notoriously the fact ; and there are numbers who, though attached to the Society from birth, education, habit, connexions, the absence of any strong opinion in any other direction, and in many cases from a general belief that the Society holds up a higher standard of spiritual worship than other sects, yet in word and in deed renounce the fundamental principle of their predecessors, and believe that though men's minds are illuminated and purified by the Holy Spirit, yet that the ultimate rule for every man is his own private judgment, which they admit must vary, and is intended to vary, according to his character, education, and outward opportunities. There are numbers who have not left the Society, who are prepared to renounce, and who do in their daily conversation renounce, the high principle originally contended for, that the infallible guidance of the Spirit was to remove the very ground and occasion of sects, and guide men universally in the same road. They are willing to admit that the Society is merely one sect among many, though they think it has peculiar claims to attention and regard, on account of its greater spirituality. Am I asked upon what grounds I charge a vast proportion of the Friends with holding opinions which amount to a renunciation of the very essence of ancient Quakerism ? I answer, on the authority, not simply of my own observation, but of the widely-circulated writings of Friends of the highest standing. You have already read a long quotation from Robert Barclay, on the functions of the Holy Spirit in the Church ; hear, now, Joseph John Gurney, on the same subject.

After remarking that all persons agree that the Holy Spirit does operate on the mind, but that they differ about the mode of operation, some holding it to be not *direct*, but only through the medium of the Scriptures and preaching ; others holding it to be *direct*, though not *perceptible* ; he goes on thus : * “ Now,

* Joseph J. Gurney's “ Religious Peculiarities,” c. lli., p. 87.

with Friends (and I believe with very many persons not so denominated), it is a leading principle of religion—a principle on which they deem it to be in a peculiar manner their duty to insist—that the operations of the Holy Spirit in the soul are not only immediate and direct, but perceptible; and that we are all furnished with an inward Guide or Monitor, who makes his voice known to us, and who, if faithfully obeyed and closely followed, will infallibly conduct us into true virtue and happiness, because he leads us into a real conformity with the will of God.”

That this is a leading principle with the Catholics is notorious to every one who has the smallest acquaintance with the Catholic divines. The written lives of almost all the Catholic Saints show the practical belief, that though the sacraments are divinely appointed means of grace, yet that the operation of the Holy Spirit in other ways is direct, immediate and perceptible, and to be followed by every one. But what I wish especially to draw attention to is, the sentiment that this Monitor will infallibly guide us, not, as Robert Barclay says, into all truth, into all religious knowledge, including even the knowledge of what books of Scripture are canonical, and what passages are rightly transcribed and rightly translated, but only into “true virtue and happiness.”

It is next admitted,* that in following this guidance people are exceedingly liable to be deluded by the activity of the human imagination. “Such a view of the subject necessarily introduces the inquiry by what characteristics the voice of the Lord’s Spirit, and the voice of the unauthorised human imagination, in matters of religion, may be distinguished from each other.” “† I believe the sincere and humble Christian, who has been taught the lesson of waiting upon God, and whose religion is of no shallow character, will be, by Divine grace, enabled to discern the one from the other.” Now, before entering upon these characteristics, I suppose it will be admitted by every man of candour, that Fenelon was sincere and humble, and had been taught the lesson of waiting upon God, and that his religion was of no shallow character; and the same description will apply to hundreds of well-known Catholics, about whom there could be little difference of opinion.

* Joseph J. Gurney’s “Religious Peculiarities,” p. 43, 44.

† Ibid., p. 45.

First, then, the human imagination is "violent and restless in its impulses," producing "disquietude;" while the voice of CHRIST is a still small voice, "not more pure than gentle." "When the pride of the heart is laid low—when the activity of human reasoning is quieted—when the soul is reduced to a state of silent subjection in the presence of its Creator, then is this 'still small voice' intelligibly heard." This reads like a paraphrase on the sentence I have already quoted from Louis de Blois. "Here it may not be improper to remark, that in order to maintain this state of humble and quiet dependence upon God, the habit of a frequent retirement from the common occupations of life is of great use and importance. Nevertheless, such a frame of mind may be preserved, even when we are engaged in the pursuits of business." In reading this, one might fancy one's self listening to a Catholic divine, insisting on the importance and vast benefits of spiritual retreats.

Secondly, the human imagination inflames with false zeal, but cannot bring the restless mind into stillness. "On the contrary, the sure effect of obedience to the 'still small voice' of our Divine Master in the soul, is quietness, tenderness, humility, true sanity of mind, and substantial peace."

Again, the difference is marked in the outward conduct. "The man of a false enthusiasm, even if sincere, brings forth the fruits of darkness and unrighteousness," while those "who follow the LORD's Spirit, will bear the fruits of the Spirit, 'love, joy, peace,' &c." Gal. v. 22.

Entering more into detail,* J. J. Gurney tells us that the light of the Spirit of CHRIST tends (1) to the humiliation of man, to make persons tender, contrite, and lowly of heart; (2) to the practice of daily self-denial; (3) to a constantly increasing illumination, and spiritual knowledge; (4) to an exact accordance with the rules of the Gospel; (5) to an unshrinking fulfilment of those rules without being deterred by considerations of expediency, and to a perfect simplicity and singleness of heart.†

Now, I suppose, that if there is any person in modern Europe, in whose whole life and demeanour these "characteristics" are to be found, it is the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Cambray, Fenelon. And yet what do we see? Believing all the while that he was following the express revelations of the

* Ibid., p. 51.

† Ibid., p. 58.

Holy Spirit, he was led into a mode of worship, and a faith diametrically opposed to that of Friends. Was he led by the Spirit? All J. J. Gurney's characteristics are observable in his case, and therefore, if the Holy Spirit is to be our infallible guide, all J. J. Gurney's tests and characteristics prove delusive. Who could judge between Fenelon and William Penn? All this is clearly seen by J. J. Gurney, and accordingly, after explaining* that the peculiarities of Friends arise out of the principles of the Divine law, and are truly the consequences of obedience to the inward guide, he adds, "I am not asserting that such would necessarily be the experience of all persons who endeavour to follow the guidance of the Spirit; nor would I in any respect venture to set limits to the sovereignty, freedom, scope, and variety, of Divine operation. I assert only that this is *our own* experience, and that the Spirit of Truth will never lead any of the followers of JESUS into a course of conduct which is not founded on the principles of that law." That is, 'I do not mean to say that different persons may not be led differently, some into believing that the Spirit within them is infallible, others into believing that it is not; some into believing that all outward rites were abolished by CHRIST, others into believing that sacraments are an essential part of the Gospel; some into believing that a priesthood was ordained by GOD, others that it was not. All I mean to assert is, that *our* experience is in one direction, and therefore is right, because the Holy Spirit cannot mislead. If the experience of other people contradicts ours, they may be right too, for the Holy Spirit can mislead them no more than us. The Holy Spirit may reveal different, and even contradictory things to different minds; only as these opposite revelations come from an infallible source, they must both be true.'

Surely, surely, the unflinching boldness of the early Friends was better than this amiable, though false liberality, which says and unsays in a breath, for fear of appearing uncharitable. George Fox and Robert Barclay would have gone to martyrdom, rather than make the admission contained in the paragraph I have quoted from J. J. Gurney. Far from admitting that their opinions were only probable, and that the experience of other persons might differ from theirs, they asserted confidently, that their opinions were a revelation and

* Ibid. pp. 58, 59.

were certain, and they treated with ridicule those who endeavoured to conciliate them by this spurious liberality, which admits that every body's opinion may be right, though men differ as widely as light and darkness.

The early Friends started from the principle I have so often insisted on, that men have an infallible guidance, that CHRIST in his Gospel has bestowed upon us a Divine illumination, which is intended to guide us into *all* truth. If other persons shewed a disposition to surrender themselves to the teaching of the Holy Spirit, but differed with them on particular points, they spoke of them as well disposed, but only partially illuminated. If others agreed with them wholly in belief and practice, they regarded them as wholly enlightened. They looked for, and believed they had found a guidance, which bringing into subjection all human passions, prejudices and misconceptions, was unswayed by them one way or the other. In a word, they believed, as Robert Barclay expresses it, that "those who had their spiritual senses" could at once, and infallibly, without outward help, and without perversion from human imperfections, discern spiritual truths "at the first blush." There was a certain grandeur in these lofty and self-consistent pretensions, which springing, as they did, from no belief in the human superiority of the men who entertained them, and accompanied by profound self-abasement, cannot but claim and receive our sincere respect. Surely a Divine instinct instructed them, though imperfectly, in the wants and weakness of the human soul. There was no halfness, no incompleteness, no wavering, no halting between two opinions. True or false, the thing which they contended for with the unflinching resolution of martyrs, was whole, consistent, and complete.

But what shall we say to those, who in the present time, profess to hold the same language, but hold it timidly and with reserve; who reverence their predecessors, but are inclined to believe they carried the practical application of their principles a little too far; who maintain in words the same principles, but deny in practice the necessary consequence of them? Shall it be said that they are more anxious to soften down that which may prove hard and rough to others, than to insist upon, and carry out the truth? Shall we say, that born and bred in a certain religious body, but feeling its extreme pretensions to be untenable, they are more anxious to skin over the inconsistency by outward formality, than to realize within themselves a sound and healthy completeness? That from a just

reverence for their predecessors, they are content to run in a track marked out for them, while they acknowledge that the data on which it was laid down are incomplete or erroneous? Let us rather say, that from the necessity of the case they are here unconsciously doing homage to the divine Catholic principle of tradition. Except in rare cases, when a revelation from God descends among men, or else when the bonds of society are loosed, and the great deeps of custom are broken up, and men are torn violently from their old moorings, they ever live by tradition. Men do not, they cannot, they never did, and never will, reason, and make systems of religion for themselves. The time when they do so is a time of convulsion, of the dissolution of all order. It is enough for the capacities and opportunities of men, (and far more indeed than the most of us are inclined to perform), to apply and bring home to their own practical experience, the truths which they believe they have learned from a Divine tradition. This is a task weighty enough for all men. To reason, to make systems, to decide controversies, to frame creeds, is a difficult and somewhat dangerous matter, for which no natural capacity or spiritual illumination has qualified us. To realize the doctrines that have been handed down to us, to obtain by prayer that Divine illumination which shall convert abstract theological propositions into living and saving truths, this, though difficult, is possible and profitable for all men. And accordingly, we find that, truer to themselves in their conduct than in their creeds, all men unconsciously do so. They determine for themselves (perhaps) which is the Divine tradition; they adopt and defend the creed which they can gather from it. Nor are Friends exempt from the operation of this universal law. With them, too, as it is confessed, now that the age of civil and spiritual anarchy has passed away, the age of tradition has commenced. They believe the Society to be the depository of a Divine tradition, into which the Holy Spirit within each member is to breathe the breath of life. Except in times when the bonds of habit are universally dissolved, and men run up and down gathering themselves into new combinations, in little knots and companies, which they call churches, except in times like these, and a few individual cases in all times, he who does not accept the teaching of a tradition, either has no religion at all, or stands, and must stand alone, outwardly perhaps, the member of a Church, inwardly, the member of no Church whatever. Thanks be to God, He has so much care for the well-being of

society, that even where the individualizing, disassociating principle of private judgment, or private guidance, is most loudly professed, it is never, it can never be, wholly acted upon. Every man, except the few who remain sceptics and doubters all their lives, acknowledge the necessity of belonging to a Church, and of surrendering some part (in practice, almost the whole) of their private sense of religion to the authority of that Church; of chastising and restraining (consciously or unconsciously) the wanderings of the individual, by the awful discipline of the whole body. It is to this Divine and Catholic, though unacknowledged, doctrine of tradition, and not to any meaner cause, that we must attribute that practical inconsistency of the modern Friends to which I have before alluded; that holding on to the doctrine of their fathers, along with the strange renunciation of its most vital portion. The stream of time has drifted them far from the old belief, but they still speak the old language.

But though this is the cause of the inconsistency, it is not the less a dangerous state of mind. For the belief in private infallibility being withdrawn, the whole system of the rejection of the Divineness of outward rites in religion remains hollow and baseless, because, according to all human interpretation of the Scriptures and of history, certain outward rites were instituted by CHRIST. If men have an infallible guide within them which teaches them to lay aside the ordinary rules of interpretation of language, it is well. But if not, let it be considered upon what fearful ground they stand, who disbelieving all inward infallibility, and, perhaps, seeing some reason for thinking it possible that baptism by water, or some other outward rite, may have been enjoined by CHRIST, yet lull themselves asleep by the vain delusion, that after all, it can be of little consequence. From the sincere, from the perfect and undoubting believer, all things may be accepted by God, who values nothing so much as perfect singleness of heart. But he who sees reason to doubt, and will not take the trouble to enquire, who is half inclined to believe that a certain command has been given, but thinks it of little moment, because it appears trifling, and therefore will not probe the subject to the bottom; such a one has no reason to account himself sincere. He is not using all the means that God has provided him with. But, alas! the scornful exclamation of Naaman, the Syrian, is still to be heard: "Are not Abana, and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May

I not wash in them and be clean ?” Baptism by water seems a foolish outward ceremony, of no worth or meaning. Can I not, without the foolishness of water baptism, be saved by faith alone, by the Spirit alone, by moral honesty alone, by works alone, or by some one of the many other ways which men have laid down of their own invention to travel towards the City of God ? To this question there is but one answer. For him who believes, or who sees reason to think it possible (and will not enquire further), that baptism by water was meant by CHRIST in the command to baptize, there is but one known road to salvation, and that lies through the spiritual regeneration contained in the sacrament of water baptism. For one who is uncertain in his mind, the question is most awful. It is neither more nor less than this : shall I continue to reject as worthless what, for anything that I certainly know, may be the very means of salvation appointed by CHRIST.

Let not this counsel be despised as coming from one so wholly insignificant as myself. I do earnestly entreat every one who recognizes the necessity of some certain guidance and teaching, and who at the same time sees reason to believe it possible that an outward baptism may have been conjoined with the grace of regeneration, or that an outward baptism of any kind has been instituted, or that the Eucharist, under some shape or other, may be a Divine ordinance, to probe this matter to the bottom. I entreat them to ask themselves whether outward ordinances do not suppose the existence of a visible Church ? Whether a visible Church does not suppose an outward organization and government of Divine institution ?—Whether a Divine organization may be broken up with as much indifference as a human arrangement ?—Whether any guidance can be complete and certain, which does not contain both the inward individual illumination, and the outward guidance of the Church, both proceeding from the same heavenly source ?—Whether God cannot, and does not often guide and dispense his grace through impure instruments ?—Whether the guidance through the Church, if intended to help us into all truth, can be a guidance through more Churches than one, or through any body which men of their own selection choose to denominate a Church ?—Whether they feel competent by any inward or outward assistance whatever to determine with any degree of certainty the meaning, the scope, the full purport of those numerous passages in the Gospel, in which outward institutions are

spoken of? And lastly, whether, if the New Testament related to any matter of mere human interest on which they could be perfectly impartial, they would ever dream of believing that the writers intended to furnish a complete exposition sufficient for the perfect instruction of the most illiterate, of the subject on which they have treated? I entreat those who may have misgivings on any of these topics to follow them out with humble sincerity : not to think they have done their part, or have in any respect earned the favour of God, if they shall have striven violently to suppress doubts which may have a heavenly origin, and shall have purchased a hollow peace, by stifling those clamours within them which are unwelcome, because they threaten to disturb their delightful, but unsafe tranquillity.

For a Friend, the admission of the obligation of the rite of baptism is no trifling matter. If once admitted, the whole foundation of Quakerism is undermined, because Quakerism is built upon nothing else than this principle, that the teaching of the Holy Spirit within the heart, unaided by teaching, or help, or ordinance from without, is the all in all of Christianity. If but one outward ordinance can be found, the Friend has then a wholly new search to enter upon. He has to determine by an investigation wholly unfamiliar to him, the nature and the purpose of the rite, the benefits which a submission to it confers, and the evils resulting from a refusal to adopt it. He has to determine (if it be the rite of baptism for instance) whether he will adopt it with the Protestant Dissenters as a mere Jewish washing, a formal outward lustration, or with the main body of Christians, in all ages, as a sacrament, or instrument of grace. If it be the Lord's Supper, he has to determine, moreover, to whom the duty of administering it belongs, whether the institution of a rite so solemn, does not of necessity involve the establishment of a fixed unchangeable order of administration.

It is not as matters of speculation that I press these topics of enquiry. They involve the most momentous practical questions about which the human mind can be engaged. The point at issue is nothing less than the mode, the economy of salvation. In investigating these awful subjects, if we use due sincerity, and are influenced by no human respects, either of the good opinion of others, or our own inward indolence and love of ease, if we are pure from these things, then, although we err, the mercies of God are bound-

less, and he will judge us according to our opportunity. "We may err," says St. Austin, "but we shall not be heretics." But if we shall be found in any way unfaithful stewards of the talent entrusted to us, guided not by a love of truth, but by a love of ease and indifference; if, when reasonable doubts have presented themselves, we have obstinately averted our attention, and decided summarily against a harsh truth, because it was more pleasing to wrap ourselves in a comfortable deceit; if we have been satisfied with lukewarmness in opinion, and because the subject was perplexed, have therefore been content to remain in a misty twilight, balancing between light and darkness, neither wholly accepting a doctrine, nor wholly rejecting it, but desirous, for the sake of a hollow peace, to shake hands at once with truth and falsehood, I do believe that the judgments of God will be heavier upon us, than if we were honestly and consistently evil. "I would thou wert hot or cold. So then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth."

If there are none lukewarm, none uncertain in their faith, and yet indifferent, doubtful, and yet content to remain in doubt rather than rouse themselves to the investigation of truth, these observations fall harmless, and my desire for the well-being of my friends must be my apology for having hazarded them. But if there are any to whom this description applies, their danger furnishes me with a complete, though terrible excuse. To them I refer myself. I was once, I doubt not, in a far worse condition than that in which they now are, and I have been rescued from it by the mercy of God. I know the evils of that condition by my own experience, and I desire nothing more than that they too may awake from their lethargy, may enter upon the inquiry with the earnestness the subject demands, and never cease till they have found perfect satisfaction, and for their feet a resting-place upon the everlasting rock.

